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ABSTRACT

The Nebraska Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education was approved in 1992. Covering the University of Nebraska, the state colleges, community colleges, independent colleges and universities, and private career institutions, the plan is revised periodically to reflect the state's changing needs. Within the plan, six major issues important to higher education in Nebraska have been identified as: assisting institutions in fulfilling roles and missions; facilitating access to postsecondary education; providing leadership in meeting statewide educational needs; promoting the creation of exemplary education institutions; serving as a catalyst for creation of new partnerships; and advocating for operation of strong, efficient institutions. The nine chapters of the report discuss: preparing a comprehensive postsecondary education plan; the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education's vision statement; defining and fulfilling roles and missions; providing access by offering recommendations to increase diversity; creating guidelines for meeting educational needs of students, employers, and citizens; setting guidelines for creating exemplary educational institutions; creating partnerships and educational bridges with businesses and communities; operating high quality institutions within the context of limited resources; and executing a statewide facilities plan. (SM)

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ED 440 568

Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education

Revised January 3, 2000

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The Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education is a living document that is revised frequently by the Commission to reflect changes in our State's higher education environment. The Commission welcomes suggestions and comments regarding needed revisions to the Comprehensive Plan.

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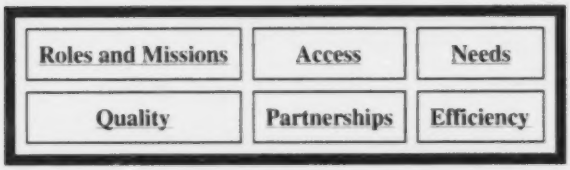
Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education

Executive Summary



The Nebraska Constitution and Statutes give the Commission responsibility for statewide comprehensive planning for postsecondary education. On June 26, 1992, the Coordinating Commission approved the state's first Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education. The Commission approved the first revision of the Plan on January 10, 1995, and will continue to revise the Plan periodically to reflect changing needs of the state. Business, civic and academic leaders will actively participate in this process. Within the Plan, the Commission identifies six major issues important to higher education in Nebraska. The Commission is committed to fostering a new level of collaborative leadership to address each of these issues.

Roles and Missions

Assist institutions to fulfill their roles and missions

The Comprehensive Plan is based on a comprehensive approach to postsecondary education involving the University of Nebraska, the State Colleges, the Community Colleges, the Independent Colleges and Universities, and the private career institutions. The Commission recognizes the vital role of each of these sectors in meeting statewide educational goals and encourages each institution and sector to flourish and lead within its own role and mission.

Access

Facilitate student access to postsecondary education

Access to postsecondary education is vitally important to the people of Nebraska. The Commission will actively support reasonable access to postsecondary education to all who are ready. It will assist in the educational development of all Nebraska citizens to the limits of their capacities, free of artificial or unnecessary constraints. The use of new technologies will help to redefine the concept of access to higher education.

Needs

Provide leadership in meeting statewide educational needs
Education that is progressive and rewarding must identify and address the current and future needs of the residents of the state. Nebraska depends on postsecondary education to provide a creative, problem-solving citizenry for the state; a skilled and professional work force for the state's employers; and an education that prepares individuals for a lifetime of learning.

Quality

Promote the creation of exemplary education institutions
The Commission believes that success in building an exemplary educational system requires steadfast institutional commitment to our students and their education; prioritization of efforts within teaching, research and public service; transdisciplinary efforts that make the most efficient use of resources; and accountability through performance measures appropriate to each institution's specific role and mission.

Partnerships

Serve as a catalyst for the creation of new partnerships
The Commission believes that no successful postsecondary education institution can operate successfully in isolation. Partnerships within postsecondary education, as well as between postsecondary education and other such as K/12, employers, and governmental and public agencies, will help bridge gaps with the state and lead us together toward the "good life" all Nebraskans hope to enjoy.

Efficiency

Advocate for the operation of strong, efficient institutions
The Commission urges postsecondary educational leaders to focus on the effective and efficient utilization and management of limited educational resources to attain optimal educational results. This will require institutions to set priorities appropriate to their individual roles and missions. The Commission can facilitate achievement of this goal through its statutory responsibilities.

Chapter One

Introduction

Preparing a comprehensive postsecondary education plan for any state is exceedingly complex. This planning requires a clear understanding of the roles and missions of the sectors and institutions within postsecondary education. It calls for an awareness of the many issues affecting all levels of education in the state, as well as in other regions of the country. Planning demands identifying and setting priorities to meet statewide postsecondary education goals.

Successful comprehensive planning is dependent on a shared, realistic vision of what postsecondary education can and should become in the future.

In November of 1990, the people of Nebraska voted to amend their Constitution, assigning comprehensive statewide planning for postsecondary education to a new Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education effective, January, 1992. The Legislature directed the Coordinating Commission to complete the first statewide plan for postsecondary education by July 1, 1992. While this date reflected a mandate, it was but a precursor to an evolving process and an evolving document. Never completely finished, the plan is as much a process as a product.

Nebraska's Postsecondary Education Comprehensive Statewide Plan must address the critical issues our society and our institutions confront today. The plan must be dynamic and flexible to accommodate change and, at the same time, lay a solid framework to guide current and future actions.

- For the Commission, the Comprehensive Plan serves as an operating manual upon which rules, procedures and decisions are based.
- For the state's postsecondary educational sectors and institutions, it is a guide, providing objectives and directions to work in conjunction with their own planning and policy-making processes.
- For state government, the Comprehensive Plan will help establish continuity of policy and provide a consistent direction that can balance the inevitable changes in administrations and office holders.
- For the people of Nebraska, it is a process that is intended to represent them as students, present and future; as employers; and as taxpayers.

The Comprehensive Plan is inextricably linked to the Commission's rules and regulations which have direct implications for the state's public postsecondary educational institutions. Among other functions, the Commission has responsibility to review and approve or disapprove these institutions' proposed and existing instructional programs, review and modify budget requests, and approve or disapprove capital construction projects.

Comprehensive, by definition, is a broad consideration, perhaps to the point of all inclusiveness. Nonetheless, this Comprehensive Plan does not answer all questions about Nebraska postsecondary education. It will not revolutionize our postsecondary education structure. The Comprehensive Plan is built upon the foundation of existing postsecondary educational institutions within our state, the existing levels of student preparation, employer needs, and financial resources committed to postsecondary education, as well as upon our state's Constitution and diverse statutes. Yet, as described in the Commission Vision Statement, **"ONE NEBRASKA: A Shared Vision of Postsecondary Education in the Twenty-First Century,"** changes in our state, nation and world impose a sense of urgency for reform within postsecondary education. Over time, the changes that will result from the Comprehensive Plan policies will strengthen our postsecondary educational institutions as they confront demands brought forth by change.

The Commission is committed to a higher education environment that includes equality and fairness for all people, irrespective of considerations such as age, culture, disability, gender or race. The context of this document reflects this commitment as it addresses racial and cultural diversity.

As the environment for postsecondary education changes, the Comprehensive Plan must continually evolve and adjust. It is the responsibility of those who are interested in education and care about our state's future to examine regularly the continued development of this vital document and assure it meets the state's changing needs.

Chapter Two

Vision Statement

ONE NEBRASKA: A shared vision of postsecondary education in Nebraska

Introduction	Define distinct institutional roles	Fulfill missions of teaching, research and public service
Provide access to postsecondary education	Meet the needs of students and the state of Nebraska	Create exemplary postsecondary education institutions
Create partnerships	Operate high quality institutions within the context of limited resources	Closing

Introduction

At a time when our world, our nation and our state are rapidly changing, the Commission sets forth a vision of postsecondary education in Nebraska that demands coordination and partnerships, flexibility, innovation, and achievement at the highest level. It is a vision that recognizes the critical place of postsecondary education in Nebraska's future participation in the twenty-first century.

The vision is based on several assumptions about the future. While no one can accurately predict the future, trends upon which we can predict change are nonetheless clear. Many changes will have direct impact on postsecondary education. If we are to be affected by change, it is crucial that we are active participants in that process.

We will live in a nation and a state with increased racial and cultural diversity. The concept of "minority" will describe reality inadequately as minority populations become majorities in some states. Our citizens, many of whom have assumed that their command of the English language could suffice for them throughout the world, will discover the need for Spanish and other languages within our own country. African-Americans, Asians, Hispanics, and Native Americans, among others, will play increasingly larger and more important roles within our nation s infrastructure. With each passing day, our state will more closely mirror this nation-wide trend.

Technology will increasingly pervade our lives, both at work and at home. To remain competitive and continue to enjoy a high standard of living, we must integrate these technologies into the knowledge and skill base of Nebraskans.

Many recent world-wide political events that have changed our world substantially also have brought hope for a more stable world. The Commission believes this stability is more likely to endure with enlightened citizens who have the ability and willingness to view others with open minds. Educated citizens who can make informed decisions will contribute solutions that further advance our national and international stability.

In Nebraska, fewer citizens have roots in our rural areas and communities. The state is becoming increasingly urbanized. While agriculture will remain a cornerstone industry within our state, industrial and service diversification will change the overall basis of our state's economy.

For many, change itself is a frightening and formidable adversary. Postsecondary education must lead the way for the people of our state to understand the positive implications of change. Preparing Nebraskans for change will prepare them for success.

Nebraskans always have embraced change as essential to survival. By adapting to and using the natural resources around them, our state s earliest residents, Native Americans, had survived by developing a culture that adapted to the harsh realities of life on the Plains. The settlers that followed in the 1800s survived by using open prairies for farm and ranch land that fed and supported their families. Their successors survived by broadening the state s economy into one of national and international multi-industrial strength. The challenge of change is inherent in the spirit of Nebraska.

During the last decades of the twentieth century,Nebraska s postsecondary educational institutions have responded to accelerated social, political, cultural, and economic changes. These changes are a prelude to those that await us in the twenty-first century. To meet the diverse challenges of our future, Nebraska s postsecondary educational institutions must prepare to set aside certain long-standing practices that have served us well in the past.

Change is inevitable. Positive responses to change are not. Failure to choose to respond pro-actively to change can destine our postsecondary institutions to indifference and mediocrity.

To deny change is to choose:

- The lessened competitiveness of a second-rate economy
- A populace less able to make complex decisions
- A less desirable social and cultural environment

To deny change is to choose **not** to:

- Prepare students to succeed in the world they will enter after graduation
- Welcome and embrace racial and cultural diversity as a vital element within our institutions
- Make difficult decisions about duplication, transferability, and accountability that assure taxpayers their dollars are wisely spent.

Nebraska cannot afford to deny change. We must choose to accept its challenge.

Fortunately, Nebraska is well situated to meet this challenge. Its historic commitment to all education, including its public institutions of higher learning, provides an important legacy of public support. Nebraskans understand that cooperation and coordination are necessary for our mutual well-being.

They know that sacrifice and commitment are essential to any worthwhile endeavor. Their admiration for an entrepreneurial response to change promises strong public support for the work of the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education.

Nebraskans are ready for change. We proceed from a position of strength. We can fairly, responsibly and creatively resolve issues facing Nebraska now and in the twenty-first century. We can choose a plan that will mean the difference between educational institutions that thrive in the coming century and institutions that struggle merely to survive.

The Commission's vision is based on a comprehensive approach to postsecondary education involving the University of Nebraska, the State Colleges, the Community Colleges, the Independent Colleges and Universities, and the Institutions. The Commission recognizes the vital role of each of these sectors in meeting statewide educational goals. It encourages each institution and sector to flourish and lead within its distinctive role and mission, yet cooperate and coordinate with the others.

Within this context, the Commission sees its role as one that strives to minimize divisions between sectors and institutions and to maximize the potential of all. The intended result is a nationally recognized, efficient, and coordinated postsecondary educational system that effectively serves its statewide constituency and contributes to our nation's goals.

Seven themes emerged as the Commission envisioned the future of postsecondary education in the state. The Commission defines its vision for the future of postsecondary education within the scope of each of these themes.

Define distinct institutional roles

Coordinated postsecondary education in Nebraska provides institutions an opportunity to advance to more specific, targeted superiority. Nebraska s needs are far too diverse for any one institution to satisfy. More clearly defined mission statements regarding the roles of teaching, research, and public service, combined with increased coordination among Nebraska s postsecondary educational institutions, will provide direction for each institution.

As each institution defines its distinct role within the system, each will identify the students, programs, and services most appropriate to its role. Each can develop institutional strengths that enhance its distinct role and support the total responsibilities of postsecondary education. The Commission can facilitate the cooperation among the sectors and institutions that is necessary to achieve this goal.

Nebraska students will reap the immediate benefits of this diverse postsecondary educational system. Students will choose institutions with a clear understanding of each institution's distinct role and mission. The intent is not to limit the number of students entering any one institution but instead to increase a student s opportunity for success. Informed choices by students based on the "personalities" of the individual institutions will lead to improved student satisfaction, better student retention and increased numbers of students successfully reaching their goals. Informed choices will allow all students, including minorities, women and nontraditional-age students in Nebraska, to identify institutions that best serve their individual needs. Ultimately, Nebraska as a state will benefit from the coordinated and clearly defined roles of postsecondary educational institutions.

Fulfill missions of teaching, research and public service

Nebraska and its students are best served by a network of postsecondary educational institutions that

fulfill their missions of teaching, research, and public service. The emphasis and levels of responsibility for each mission will vary from sector to sector and institution to institution. The Commission challenges each institution to find a balance, appropriate to its role and mission, that will best serve the students and meet the needs of the state.

The heart of any great educational system is the student, the learner. Students needs are central to designing and implementing effective and relevant educational programs. Within the mission of teaching, the state s postsecondary institutions will provide a range of educational opportunities which will enable graduates to prosper in their chosen fields. Education succeeds only if it instills in the individual a lifelong commitment to learning. Graduates must leave our institutions with skills that lead to satisfying careers, and as enlightened citizens with the knowledge and values to make a positive contribution to our democratic society and to enrich their lives.

A professional and qualified faculty is essential to each institution s teaching mission. Faculty must be supported in their efforts to be professionally active in their academic or technical field; to seek professional development opportunities; to embrace new, improved teaching methods; and, at all times, to strive to meet the needs of their students.

Each institution must maintain a balance between teaching and research that is appropriate to its mission. Research supports good teaching, so it is appropriate that all of Nebraska s institutions have a research role. However, the extent and purpose of research should vary from sector to sector and institution to institution.

The technological and economical survival of our country and state, as well as the quality of our own lives, depends on research by postsecondary educational institutions. Research in areas pertaining directly to Nebraska and its leading industries is of particular interest and should be encouraged and recognized. However, many other worthwhile research projects go beyond Nebraska s needs, to advance knowledge and promote the professional development of faculty. These projects also deserve support when they relate to an institution s mission.

Successful educational institutions cannot operate in isolation from the communities and regions they serve. Useful public service is an integral part of the missions of teaching and research in all disciplinary programs, and it deserves encouragement and recognition.

The value of public service to a student s educational experience also should be recognized. As active participants in community service projects, students can learn firsthand of the many rewards and satisfactions resulting from service to others. Nebraska's postsecondary institutions, within the context of their missions, can provide leadership and human resources, enhance cultural awareness, and actively participate in public service activities. As with teaching and research, public service outcomes should meet both immediate and long-term needs.

Provide access to postsecondary education

Nebraska provides five vital sectors of postsecondary education, all rich with diverse prospects for students. Interlinked as a system, they offer access for students of all ability levels. Appropriate and varying admission standards for each sector and institution will increase student success as measured by higher student retention, graduation, and job placement rates.

For students to succeed, however, they must be ready to learn. The primary means of providing access to postsecondary education is in properly preparing students in the primary and secondary systems. The

Commission supports the reforms now underway in our kindergarten through twelfth grade educational systems. By improving academic skills at that level, college-bound students will have greatly increased opportunities for success in postsecondary education. For those inadequately prepared, a bridge between the K/12 system and postsecondary education will enable students to progress beyond their current levels. Postsecondary education and the K/12 system must work together to address where and how this need is best met.

All Nebraskans deserve reasonable access to higher education. Discrimination or the impression of discrimination based on factors such as race, gender, wealth, age, disabilities, or place of origin have no place in education. Overcoming these barriers will require the continued joint effort of education, state government, and concerned leaders throughout the state.

The rising costs for postsecondary education throughout our country have raised concerns that students are being priced out of postsecondary education opportunities. Tuition and fee costs at Nebraska's public institutions are generally less than national averages. Despite this, for many Nebraskans paying for a college education is perceived as a significant barrier. To meet future needs, the Commission and the educational institutions should explore all possible ways to increase the size and scope of student financial aid programs. Postsecondary education must be affordable and accessible to the people of our state.

Nebraska's expansive geography creates a context in which higher education is more accessible to some than to others, based on their place of residence. Nebraska cannot and should not attempt to provide educational institutions within close proximity of all citizens. However, it can provide far more educational opportunities throughout the state through collaborative efforts using telecommunications and other emerging technologies that bring education to place-bound citizens around the state.

These technologies should become priorities at our educational institutions. They also require the support of the state government and citizenry. People must become aware of the total offerings available through emerging technologies if they are to gain fuller access to the many educational opportunities they present.

Meet the needs of students and the state of Nebraska

Education that is progressive and satisfying begins by identifying and addressing the current and future needs of the citizens of the state. Nebraska depends on postsecondary education to provide a creative, problem-solving citizenry for the state, a skilled and professional work force for the state s employers, and an education that develops the "whole person" who is prepared for a lifetime of learning.

To meet the state s future needs, Nebraska s schools, colleges, and universities must produce more people with skills and knowledge in the fields of math and science. An untapped source is women and minorities, whose numbers are still under-represented in these fields. They, and other students, can be encouraged to enter disciplines such as math, science, engineering, etc., leading to career fields where excellent opportunities exist. General education courses at each institution must support these efforts and further prepare our graduates for success in a changing society.

Student support services are essential at each institution. It is unacceptable to expect students to succeed in an educational environment that is unaware of or unresponsive to their needs. Students must feel welcomed and accepted. Services that address the needs of all students as well as those specific to minorities, the disabled, and nontraditional students will augment student retention and increase opportunities for success.

For the state of Nebraska and its students to participate successfully in a global community, postsecondary education must take on a more global perspective. Top quality programs emphasizing science, mathematics, communications, languages, and international studies will help Nebraska graduates compete among the world's best. Exposure to racial and cultural diversity in our institutions' student bodies and faculties will help to prepare graduates for success wherever they may live and work.

All Nebraskans should be literate and possess work and citizenship skills. The state s postsecondary institutions must cooperate with communities and agencies within their service areas and, as appropriate, across the state, to help assure that all citizens have access to educational programs providing these and other basic skills. Telecommunications and other emerging technologies will facilitate achievement of this goal.

Postsecondary education also will address the students and citizens needs for a healthy lifestyle within the state. Our colleges and universities will support efforts to promote awareness of health issues including initiatives toward campuses free of violence and drugs.

Create exemplary postsecondary education institutions

Nebraskans expect hard work, visible results, and continued improvement at their postsecondary institutions. The Commission envisions a postsecondary educational system throughout the state where students have greater expectations of success...where quality, not quantity, is the prevailing measure of success.

To reach these expectations, Nebraska s institutions must undergo a continual process of re-examination. Governing Boards must insist on quality and efficiency in all aspects of institutional operations. Boards and institutions must ask such questions as:

- Who should we serve?
- Is bigger always better?
- Can we be everything to everyone?
- Are we operating efficiently?
- Are faculty properly qualified?
- Are students receiving the best instruction possible in the classroom?
- Are we meeting the needs of under-represented populations in our state?
- Are students choosing our institutions for the right reasons?
- Are we the best that we can be?

Merely stating that we provide excellence in education is not enough. Nebraska's colleges and universities should achieve measurable student outcomes and meet clearly defined accountability measures. Increased accountability at each institution through student and institutional assessment, improved student retention, good job placement rates, higher numbers of post-graduate degrees pursued, and recognition of outstanding performance will help confirm that Nebraskans receive good value for their postsecondary education tuition and tax dollars.

The Commission's goal is a state-wide network of institutions that is exemplary in its ability to understand and meet the educational needs of the state and its citizens. Departments and programs within these institutions must collaborate to provide interdisciplinary education that broadens students' educational experiences to better prepare them for the realities of living and working in a complex

society.

It must be a system accessible to and supportive of students from all walks of life. This requires institutions that recognize the value of diversity and seek to recruit and hire women and men representing differing races and cultures. Program curriculum, support services, and student activities also should reflect awareness of the value of racial and cultural diversity.

Motivation is a key element in the promotion of excellence. Institutions, faculty, staff and students who display high performance should be recognized appropriately. Students will be served best if faculty are encouraged to pursue professional development opportunities appropriate to their positions and their institution's role. Professional development will enable faculty to encounter new teaching and research methods, emerging technologies within their fields, and educational issues including racial and cultural diversity and international perspectives.

Create partnerships

A goal of the Commission is to be a catalyst in creating one of the best pre-kindergarten through postsecondary education systems in American education. This can be achieved. It will require collaborative partnerships and firm determination among citizens, the public and private sectors, and the state s pre-college and postsecondary educational institutions. It will require that businesses recognize and accept their role in the educational process. It will need the support of the state s leaders and citizens

Education in Nebraska ideally would be "seamless" and seen as a continuum, starting with early childhood education in the family, leading to the elementary grades, through secondary and postsecondary education, to continued life-long learning opportunities. Each segment of the continuum needs to understand and support the goals of the others. Cooperative education programs that create bridges from one segment of education to the other will encourage and facilitate continuing education efforts.

Postsecondary education must contribute to this continuum with an integrated statewide network of accessible, transferable educational offerings. Education must, in fact, become portable as students move from one sector or institution to the other. Distinct roles and missions will further promote articulation from institution to institution. The Commission, through its role as coordinator, will facilitate inter-institutional cooperative efforts, such as articulation agreements and laddering of programs and courses. As a result, students will avoid unnecessary expenditures of time and money and the state will eliminate unnecessary duplication of educational programs and facilities.

No educational system can operate successfully in isolation. Public and private postsecondary institutions could explore opportunities to collaborate and cooperate to offer the best programs at the least cost to taxpayers. Regular interaction among the institutions will facilitate joint planning, build coalitions, assure optimal use of resources, and create shared dreams.

The state of Nebraska cannot attempt to provide programs to meet everyone s educational needs. Postsecondary educational services that are not readily available and are expensive to replicate in Nebraska may be available via regional, national, and international consortia linkages. To make maximum use of these collaborative efforts, all institutions need heightened awareness of the educational opportunities they present.

To realize lifelong learning, postsecondary education must extend beyond colleges and universities. Partnerships involving businesses, industries, agencies, cultural institutions, communities and

families...in concert with educational institutions... will greatly broaden the scope of educational endeavors.

Nebraska's employers can play a vital role by encouraging development of their employees individual potentials through financial assistance and other support for increased education. Working together, educators and employers can use innovations and technologies that make education more accessible in the work place.

Such partnerships have other benefits. Progressive partnerships forged between the state, its communities, businesses, and Nebraska s postsecondary educational system can fortify achievement of the state s economic development goals. They can create valuable linkages between academic and industrial research.

Similarly constructed partnerships between governmental and public agencies, cultural institutions, concerned citizens within the state and educational institutions will help resolve societal issues facing our citizens. These partnerships also will serve to bridge gaps within the state between the east and west, cities and rural communities, rich and poor, educated and under-educated. They will help lead us together toward the "good life" all Nebraskans hope to enjoy.

Operate high quality institutions within the context of limited resources

The postsecondary educational system envisioned within this document asks Nebraskans to continue their traditional commitment of energy, time, and resources. In return, Nebraskans can expect each educational institution and sector within the state to garner maximum value from fiscal and human resources. Improved quality, within the context of limited resources, demands that postsecondary educational institutions become increasingly efficient, targeted, productive, innovative, and receptive to change.

Decisions on programs and capital construction projects, modifications of budgets, and the allocation of state funds must be based on careful consideration of issues of need, quality, continuity, innovation, cost-effectiveness, access and equity. The state has limited resources; many competing social and economic priorities also must be addressed. These factors must be considered within the context of the Commission's review of proposals of new instructional programs, construction projects, and budgets. Institutions regularly need to re-examine existing programs, practices, and facilities to assure they are appropriate to meet student and citizen needs. Governance and administrative structures at the state and institutional levels need to exemplify efficiency and effectiveness.

Citizens, as well, must be sensitive to limited public resources. Nebraska cannot afford to provide an educational program in response to every citizen s interest. By tapping into existing resources found both within and outside of our state, we can better serve the broader educational needs of the entire state.

The vision of postsecondary education must be broad enough to provide direction for a complex future, yet relevant to today s issues and concerns. It must serve as the foundation of a Comprehensive Plan that advocates educationally and economically sound, vigorous, progressive, and coordinated education throughout the state. To endure, the vision must be shared and embraced by the educational community, the Governor, the Legislature, and businesses within our state. Most importantly, it must reflect and project the abiding values of the people of Nebraska.

Chapter Three
Define and Fulfill Roles and Missions

Introduction	Community Colleges	State Colleges	University of Nebraska	Independent Colleges & Universities	Private Career Schools
Elementary/ Secondary Schools	Employers	Higher Education Compacts & Out-of-State Institutions	Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education	Recommended Admission Standards	

Introduction

Each postsecondary education institution within our state and within our nation has a role and mission upon which it bases ach postsecondary education institution within our state and within our its educational programming and other operational procedures.

An institution's mission provides the rationale for its being and its operation. It defines the institution's fundamental convictions, values and characteristics. Traditionally, postsecondary education is considered in the context of three primary areas of responsibility within its mission: instruction, research and public service. Thus, each institution's mission provides the parameters for its programmatic service area. In addition, various institutions serve differing geographic areas of the state.

An institution's role identifies objectives toward fulfillment of its mission. It provides the basis for institutional accountability through measurable results. While missions may be broad, general statements, roles are more specific and clearly define the operational guidelines of an institution.

Roles and missions are not only applicable to postsecondary educational institutions. In meeting the goals set forth in the Comprehensive Plan, it is essential that the Commission cooperate with other entities, such as K/12 school systems and the state's employers to identify and fulfill their mutual role in meeting the learning need of all of our citizens.

Public Postsecondary Education Roles and Missions

Within Nebraska, each sector and each institution has mission responsibilities to greater or lesser degrees in instruction, research, and public service within their programmatic service areas. These roles and missions create the benchmark upon which we can measure excellence throughout our postsecondary education system.

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The Commission believes Nebraska will be best served by pursuing the following objectives relating to role and mission:

- In fulfilling their roles and missions, postsecondary educational institutions hold most eminent the importance of high quality instruction to the individual and the value of educated citizens to society.

- Quality, not quantity, is the more important factor in evaluating fulfillment of roles and missions.

- Each institution has a clearly defined role and mission, and has students, programs and services that are appropriate to that institution's role and mission.

- Fulfilling the responsibilities of postsecondary education can best be accomplished when institutions with distinct roles and missions cooperate with each other. Part of the process for institutions to achieve coordination is to strike a balance within and between them to provide excellent teaching, appropriate research and pertinent public service to the state.

- Each institution values and promotes racial and cultural diversity within the framework of its missions of instruction, research and public service.

- Limited resources demand that each institution set priorities between and within instructional programs, research projects and public service activities as a basis for budget, program and facility decisions that best serve the needs of the students and the state. Institutions cannot be everything to everyone. Institutional leaders need to make difficult decisions to adjust to changing economic realities. These decisions may include reallocating resources to reflect higher priorities within their institutions. A role and mission is not an excuse for inflexibility or a rationale for resisting needed change.

One of the purposes of the Comprehensive Plan is also to designate a geographic service area to each public institution within the state. The designated counties, their residents, and socio-economic forces are to be the primary beneficiaries of the programs and activities provided by the institution, especially for off-campus activities. Service areas are in no way meant to curtail students from other counties, states or nations from attending these institutions. The Commission recognizes that student internships, cooperative education positions and student teaching placements will cross geographic service areas.

- A public institution may not go outside its geographic/programmatic area of responsibility, as defined within this plan, unless permitted under rules and procedures adopted by the Commission.

- The Commission recognizes its designation of geographic and programmatic service areas creates the potential for layering, or overlap between institutions, in the context of programs and services. The Commission's concern is unnecessary duplication of programs and services, not necessarily an overlap of programs and services where demonstrated need exists. The Commission will monitor its rules and procedures regarding geographic service areas to determine if there is need for revision.

Instruction

The primary responsibility of our educational institutions is to facilitate learning. Students learn in many ways. Obviously, they learn in classrooms from faculty. But, students also learn from experience, from each other, from society and from the many new technologies to which they increasingly are exposed. From the most practical perspective, students learn from the total campus environment.

- It is imperative that postsecondary educators view education as an interactive process whereby students both draw from and contribute to the total environment of the institution. The Commission cautions that these values not be discarded as we implement new learning technologies that increase access and efficiency.

- The Commission encourages educators to accept teaching methods that achieve educational goals more quickly, more effectively and/or more efficiently.

Clearly defined instructional roles for each sector and institution will help students make informed choices of institutions that meet their needs. Once at the institution, students have the right to expect educational programs and support services which provide them with the best possible opportunity to learn and succeed. Given such a learning environment, it is then incumbent upon students to apply those opportunities toward their educational goals.

- Our institutions have the right to expect achievement from students as do our citizens, who have a substantial investment in those admitted to our institutions.

The obligation of institutions to students does not end with resource allocation and the admission process. It is important that institutions exhibit leadership and good judgment in resource application so that students graduating from postsecondary educational institutions are prepared to succeed in the work place and to contribute to our democratic society.

- Institutions, governing boards and the Commission, through its program review process, share responsibility to evaluate existing and proposed new instructional programs to determine if they are appropriate to role and mission, if they meet the objectives of the institution, and if they meet the needs of students and the state.

- The Commission supports availability of continuing education courses for academic, professional and personal growth within each institution's geographic and programmatic service areas to the extent need can be met with available resources. The Commission expects institutions to avoid unnecessary duplication of continuing education programs.

- Efficiency dictates that institutions identify priority areas to make the best use of limited resources. Through this process, institutions can also review program areas where there is less demand, unnecessary duplication, or inconsistency with institutional objectives. While the primary responsibility to do this rests with the governing boards, the Commission will participate in this process through its program review authority.

The Commission endorses the call to reform and revitalize education at all levels.

- Postsecondary education has a responsibility to assist in the reform of elementary/secondary

education by offering exemplary teacher training programs at the appropriate institutions

- The Commission advises postsecondary educational institutions' governing boards, administrators, and faculty to reexamine their educational programs and ask fundamental questions:

    - What are the attributes of an educated person?

    - What constitutes good undergraduate and graduate education?

    - What are the best means to achieve a good education?

    - Are our graduates adequately prepared to succeed in society as well as in the work place?

For many students, postsecondary education is synonymous with preparation to enter into and succeed in their chosen career fields. The Commission applauds institutions that wisely use expertise such as business advisory groups to develop curriculum that meets career-oriented education needs. Cooperative programs between education and business can also address employee retraining and upgrading to keep our state work force educated and abreast of changing technologies.

Education that is intended to develop the "whole person" goes beyond skills and knowledge applicable to the work force. It creates a learning environment that nurtures the intellectual, social, cultural and physical development of students. Such education instills in the student a lifelong commitment to learning. It advances the student's ability to think logically, creatively, and critically; to write and speak clearly; and to compute accurately.

General education, which includes courses in areas such as the arts and humanities, communication, social sciences and history, literature and languages, mathematics and the sciences, help provide these vital elements of postsecondary education. Strong and meaningful general education programs at all postsecondary educational institutions will provide Nebraskans valuable learning experiences that prepare them to be informed, flexible and confident citizens and workers.

- The Commission encourages Nebraska's postsecondary educational institutions to provide leadership and resources that contribute to the enlightenment of the state's citizenry.

- The Commission recognizes the value of general education courses and advocates that degree-seeking students in all institutions, no matter how specialized their programs of study, should receive quality general education as a part of their educational experience. The extent of flexibility for student choices within the general education core needs to be established based on how an institution defines an educated person.

Faculty are at the heart of our institution's instructional roles. Our institutions need diverse faculties comprised of individuals with high academic and/or occupational achievement who have the ability to facilitate learning. Institutions that truly value students also value the faculty who teach, assist and advise those students.

- Faculty, cooperative extension agents, counselors, and others with instructional and instructional

support roles, deserve to be encouraged and recognized for outstanding achievement in their area, irrespective of other institutional roles.

- Faculty need to be supported with adequate resources, facilities, salaries and professional development opportunities, including opportunities to understand the diversity of Nebraska.

Research

Our state and nation depend on our postsecondary institutions to conduct research and scholarship that generates new knowledge and technological advances in theory, techniques and products. Research is a part of each institution's role and mission in varying degrees.

At some institutions, particularly the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the University of Nebraska Medical Center, research, both basic and applied, is central to their reason for being. At the State Colleges, research is more closely tied to teaching and directly applicable to the instructional setting or faculty development. Community college research is directly applicable to the classroom or work place.

- The Commission expects each institution to strive for a balance between teaching and research that is appropriate to its distinct mission.

Research means resources and recognition for our institutions. It attracts qualified faculty and provides them with significant professional development opportunities. Research can create new and distinct learning opportunities for the students. Ties between research institutions, industry and the state enhance options for technology transfer and support the state's economic development. Research activities at postsecondary educational institutions can be misunderstood by the general public who do not see its results. The public asks for accountability from these research activities. They question whether research enhances or detracts from our institutions' instructional roles. Our institutions must regularly respond to these concerns.

- The Commission proposes that, to the extent feasible, faculty scholarly activity and research at all institutions demonstrably enhance teaching.

- The Commission encourages incentives for faculty who bring their research into the instructional setting for the benefit of their students. In addition, the Commission favors processes for hiring and promoting faculty that emphasize the quality of teaching performance as well as research productivity.

- The Commission counsels institutions to take an active role in educating the public about the value and productivity of their research.

The Commission recognizes that some valuable research that advances knowledge may not be directly applicable to Nebraska or its citizens. However, much research has practical applications, particularly in the transfer of technology to Nebraska businesses. This technology may translate to new products or services that create new jobs. Such direct results from research will help Nebraskans recognize the value of research to the state's and nation's economy and to their personal quality of life.

- The Commission encourages postsecondary institutions to transfer knowledge and technology produced by research to Nebraska's businesses to increase their competitiveness and promote our

state's economy. Goal-oriented, scientific and engineering-related research with high potential for technology transfer are among the most productive in achieving this goal.

- The Commission believes that the state has a role in policy and planning regarding applied research. Institutions, the Legislature, and the Executive Branch are encouraged to formulate a basis for establishing such plans. The Commission sees itself as a partner in this process.

Public Service

All institutions, irrespective of sector, have somewhat similar public service roles that vary based on the differing programs and disciplines available within each institution. Our communities, geographic regions and the state as a whole look to Nebraska's postsecondary educational institutions for leadership and active participation in public service activities.

- Postsecondary educational institutions can avoid isolationism and elitism through concerted efforts to reach out into their communities, serving as active participants in public and community service activities.

- Cooperative public service efforts between and among public and private institutions and other entities are expected. The Commission will facilitate coordination between public, private and independent postsecondary educational institutions to achieve joint efforts.

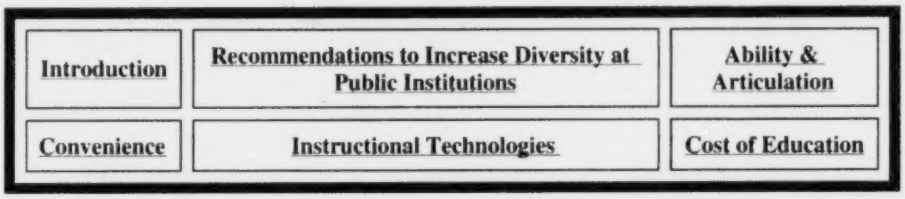
Often overshadowed by the missions of instruction and research, the Commission sees our institutions' public service missions as vitally important to provide valuable expertise, human resources and cultural activities toward the betterment of our state.

- As a consequence of all sectors having similar public service roles, there is potential for duplication. The Commission urges institutional leaders to identify and review their public service projects to eliminate unwarranted duplication.

The Commission proposes that the educational value of public service for students not be overlooked or discounted. Public service experience can vastly enhance a student's education experience. Among the most far-reaching lessons we can provide our students is an understanding of the satisfaction and rewards of service to others.

- The Commission believes that, when appropriate, public service activities should be incorporated into program curriculum and student activities.

Chapter Four
Provide Access



Introduction

Access to postsecondary education is vitally important to the people of Nebraska. Our citizens hold highly the belief that postsecondary education opportunity should be readily available to them. There is, however, a balance between perceived need for access and the state's ability to provide that access. Citizens must realize that the state cannot afford to provide everything for everyone.

For the most part, Nebraskans enjoy reasonable access to postsecondary education. Nebraskans attend college at a higher rate than the national average, and most choose to remain in Nebraska for their education. A variety of public and private institutions provide Nebraskans with many educational choices. These institutions have already undertaken many initiatives on their own to facilitate access. Yet, access issues remain within the state that must be addressed.

The Commission wishes to facilitate reasonable access to postsecondary education to all who are ready, and to assist educational development of all Nebraska citizens to the limits of their capacities, free of artificial or unnecessary constraints.

- The issues of access must focus on priorities and accommodation as they relate to discrimination, ability level, convenience and cost.

- Nebraska has an obligation to all of its people to provide support resources, educational opportunities, and a sense of an achievable future. If the vision of "One Nebraska" as a vision shared by all Nebraska is to be achieved, it must result from an effort by all Nebraska citizens working together to improve the well-being of each other.

Recommendations to Increase Diversity at Public Institutions

As a result of the changing demographics within our state, an increasing awareness by citizens of the value of education, and the recruitment efforts of our institutions, more African-Americans, Asians, Hispanics, Native Americans and other minority populations are entering Nebraska's postsecondary institutions. At the same time, increasing numbers of older or "nontraditional-age" students are entering postsecondary education. More disabled students are also enrolling in postsecondary education as our

institutions become more responsive to their needs. We cherish these changes and commend the institutions for their efforts.

- Access to postsecondary education must be available to all people irrespective of age, culture, disability, gender or race.

- Beyond providing access, the Commission believes it is essential that institutions assure that all students, particularly minorities and other under-represented groups, are welcomed and integrated into campus life and have opportunities to succeed.

The past achievement levels of many of these new student populations, minorities in particular, demonstrate a need for changes within our institutions. These include adding or enhancing specialized counseling services, appropriate support services and a nurturing atmosphere that encourages students to succeed. These improvements will benefit all students, but especially the new populations of students, many of whom, as first-generation college students, are unprepared for the campus environment.

The Nebraska 1990 census shows that members of minority populations are now residing in every county of the state. While Nebraska's demographics may be changing less rapidly than other areas of the country, we are nevertheless reflecting the national trend of increasing numbers of minorities.

Over the long term, it will be the state of Nebraska that will be a major benefactor of these initiatives as increasing numbers of minorities, women, disabled individuals and older-aged citizens have the education and training to contribute to the economic and social well-being of the state.

- Although Nebraska ranks high nationally in the share of its population with some college education, many in our population, particularly minority citizens, remain under-represented in the state's postsecondary educational institutions.

- Postsecondary educational institutions are urged to seize the opportunity to serve new student populations and, at the same time, diversify their own campuses to provide a broader educational experience for all students.

    - Institutions need to continue efforts toward recruiting and retaining a diverse student body, reflecting racial and cultural diversity.

    - The Commission urges four-year institutions to implement programs and allocate resources toward the goal of increasing the baccalaureate degree completion rate for minorities.

    - In Nebraska, as throughout the country, community colleges, particularly those located in urban centers, have enrolled a higher percentage of minority students than the four-year colleges and universities. As admission standards change at the University, minority enrollment could increase at the community colleges. However, as the community colleges' role as feeder institutions into the State College and University systems increases, the Commission believes that both the State Colleges and the University will accept increasing numbers of minority

transfer students wishing to complete their education. And, in so doing, these students will increasingly achieve their aspirations.

- The Commission strongly supports affirmative action that promotes equality and diversity at all of Nebraska's postsecondary educational institutions. The Commission calls on the leadership in Nebraska institutions to take bold initiatives to eliminate discrimination, support equity, and promote diversity within their student bodies, faculty and staff. Recommended efforts to support this goal include:

  - The Commission favors virtually universal access at community colleges which will provide educational opportunities ranging from developmental course work to technical and academic transfer programs.

  - Institutional leaders can assure that their campuses are accessible, that recruitment plans target minorities and other under-represented students, that these plans are achieved, and that adequate support services are in place to help students adjust to a college environment.

  - Institutions can actively recruit faculty and student role models for the new student populations so that as many students as possible see persons like themselves in a variety of responsible, admirable positions. The Commission especially encourages institutions to provide role models for women and minorities in fields in which they are often under-represented, such as mathematics, science, engineering, as well as at the highest levels of administration.

  - Those institutions located in rural areas where it is more difficult to recruit sufficient numbers of minority faculty, staff and students can enhance awareness of differing races and cultures through activities such as guest lecturers, exchange programs, trips to other locales, cultural events, etc. Such efforts should in no way, however, lessen these institutions' resolve to recruit minorities as students, faculty, staff and administrators on their campuses.

  - The Commission supports special activities such as mentoring programs and peer counseling that help first-generation college students and students from under-represented populations adjust to the campus environment.

  - All institutions can promote an awareness of cultural and racial diversity through their curriculum and student campus activities. Classes that increase awareness of racial and cultural diversity can be required within each institution's general education core.

- The Commission recognizes that programs and services needed to meet these objectives will require financial resources. The Commission will advocate allocation of state funds for achievement of these objectives.

Ability and Articulation

Students do not have equal abilities, interests and motivation. They certainly do not come to postsecondary education with equivalent preparation. An appropriate goal of postsecondary education

is to provide access to postsecondary education consistent with each person's abilities at any given point in his or her growth.

- All individuals deserve access to postsecondary education that is appropriate to their preparation and their goals.

- Clearly defined roles and missions and differing admission standards will help students identify the institutions that will best serve their needs.

- Postsecondary educational institutions can facilitate opportunities for individuals to move easily from one sector of postsecondary education to another as their abilities grow and their needs, interests and educational goals shift.

- A student's options for postsecondary education should not be limited by his or her choice of where first to attend college. Provided the institution is properly accredited, achievements from the first institution will open doors to new opportunities at other institutions.

These articulation guidelines recognize the traditional role of faculty in determining course comparability between institutions, and underscores the need for faculty to adjust to changes and to make fair and reasonable decisions when appropriate standards are attained. To truly meet student needs, articulation between institutions must become far more prevalent within Nebraska postsecondary education.

The Commission endorses the following transfer of credit guidelines:

- Academic credits for equivalent courses at one public institution would be appropriately recognized by the others, creating a seamless, coordinated public postsecondary educational system. This guideline would apply to students transferring from one sector to the other, such as from a community college to a State College; as well as from one institution to another within the same sector, such as from UNO to UNL or from CCC/Hastings Campus to CCC/Platte Campus.

    - Coordination among public postsecondary institutions would mean that credit earned with a satisfactory grade in an equivalent course at one regionally accredited public college or university would be accepted as credit at another regionally accredited public college or university.

    - Associate and baccalaureate degree-granting institutions would be equal partners in providing the first two years of baccalaureate degree programs. The two-year Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees would ensure that its holders have met the lower division general education requirements in all public postsecondary schools in Nebraska. Likewise, students who have satisfactorily completed all of the lower division general education requirements at a State College would be admitted to a University institution, without requiring additional lower division general education courses.

    - No student who has earned an Associate of Arts or Associate of Science degree in an accredited community college or completed the required courses for the first two years at an accredited State College, and has achieved satisfactory grades in courses equivalent to those at the University, would be required to repeat any

course.

- Students who began but did not complete the Associate of Arts or Associate in Science degree at an accredited institution would be granted credit for satisfactorily completed courses that the accepting baccalaureate institution determines are equivalent to its own courses. State College students transferring to a University institution would also be granted credit for satisfactorily completed, equivalent courses; as would University students be granted credit for satisfactorily completed, equivalent courses when they transfer to State Colleges and community colleges.

- Each institution is ultimately responsible for the quality of its educational programs. The Commission urges associate and baccalaureate degree-granting institutions to work together to assure that lower-division baccalaureate programs throughout the state are equivalent in scope and quality. The Commission, in cooperation with the sectors and institutions, will facilitate articulation agreements and transfer policies that create "portable" education credits.

- Ideally, colleges and universities would assure that transfer students have the same opportunities as non-transfer students to become integrated into the campus social, cultural and academic activities.

- The Commission will take the initiative to prepare a status report on articulation in the state between institutions. The Commission may make further recommendations regarding articulation based on the results of this report.

Convenience

As our student populations become more diverse, meeting student needs means rethinking where, when and how education occurs. Increasingly, the postsecondary student population is over 25 years old, attends part time, and must schedule classes around the locations and requirements of work and family. Class sites and times, library schedules, and office hours need to reflect the needs of these students.

- The Commission prefers that institutions conform to students' needs rather than expect students to conform to theirs'.

Nebraska's expansive geographic area can make an individual's place of residence a true, but not totally insurmountable, access problem. The vast majority of the state's population lives within 55 miles of a two-year or four-year institution. Yet, access in the western and northern parts of the state remains a problem that is difficult to fully overcome.

The state cannot afford to build more public postsecondary institutions. Nor can communities expect that even substantial community support for educational endeavors in their area will be met with enthusiasm by institutions already strapped to meet on-campus needs. Institutions simply cannot afford to provide every curriculum in every location.

- Responsive and flexible off-campus instruction facilitates access to postsecondary education for place-bound students, which is its primary purpose. However, the Commission sees no need to permit off-campus education centers to become free-standing, degree-granting, public postsecondary institutions.

- The Commission recognizes that geographic access through off-campus programs may be at the expense of on-campus programs. Institutions need to identify priorities based on need and resources in establishing an appropriate balance between on- and off-campus programming.

Instructional Technologies

Postsecondary education can benefit from maximum use of new and emerging instructional technologies that create opportunities for expanded and innovative instruction, for increased course and resource sharing among institutions, and for more comprehensive distance learning options for citizens throughout the state.

These technologies include, but are not limited to, course work delivered via terrestrial or satellite-based telecommunications, which may be synchronized in time between students and teachers, such as a two-way interactive video classroom, or asynchronous, such as a student learning largely through computer-mediated or internet-based programs. Such course work may be offered by individual institutions or through a consortium of multiple institutions representing several states. In many cases, these technologies will be used as part of an otherwise traditional course of program of study. In general, course work offered via these new technologies is student-centered, self-paced and flexible as to time and place.

Geographic boundaries and remote locations present few obstacles for most of the new instructional technologies. Instead, these technologies allow Nebraskans to choose from a broad array of educational options offered through various technologies by institutions and other entities both from with or outside of our state.

- The Commission proposes that the state and its postsecondary education institutions commit to the use of instructional technologies that will broaden access to postsecondary education and support a "seamless" education system throughout the state.

    - Expanded, coordinated and well-planned use of instructional technologies throughout the state will:

        Serve as a good investment of Nebraska's resources by providing a reasonably efficient method of broadening and enhancing access to postsecondary educational opportunities.

        Provide opportunities for innovative and coordinated educational projects among the K/12 system, postsecondary education, and the communities they serve.

        Allow institutions to tailor courses and programs to meet the needs of specific groups of people, regardless of their location.

        Assist postsecondary educational institutions to serve businesses through increased access to, and sharing of, educational and business-related expertise.

        Offer institutions the opportunity to share high quality programs and

outstanding teachers. Such exchanges will broaden and enrich the educational experience of students at more institutions and provide greater efficiency in use of the state's resources.

New challenges accompany the profound changes and benefits that technology brings to education. One such challenge is quality assurance. Technology that allows institutions and businesses throughout the country and world to offer academic programs over long distance into individual homes and work places will be difficult to measure in terms of the quality of the programming and services that are being provided.

- It is important that all distance learning programs available in Nebraska result in learning outcomes appropriate to the rigor and breadth of the degree/certificate awarded.

- The Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education and representatives of Nebraska's postsecondary education institutions are encouraged to work together to inform citizens of the expectations and standards for educational programs delivered through instructional technologies and, to the extent possible, to assure the quality of those educational programs and support services made available at distance to students residing throughout the state.

- The Commission endorses the North Central Association's Guidelines for Distance Learning. Courses offered in Nebraska via instructional technologies are expected to meet or exceed the following standards:

  - **Curriculum and Instruction**

    Programs provide for timely and appropriate interaction between students and faculty, and among students.

    The institution's faculty assumes responsibility for and exercises oversight of distance education, ensuring both the rigor of programs and the quality of instruction.

    The institution ensures that the technology used is appropriate to the nature and objectives of the program.

    The institution ensures the currency of materials, programs, and courses.

    The institution's distance education policies are clear concerning the ownership of materials, faculty compensation, copyright issues, and the utilization of revenue derived from the creation and production of software, telecourses, or other media products.

    The institution provides appropriate faculty support specifically related to distance education.

    The institution provides appropriate training for faculty who teach in distance education programs.

- **Evaluation and Assessment**

  The institution assesses student capability to succeed in distance education programs and applies this information to admission and recruiting policies and decisions.

  The institution evaluates the educational effectiveness of its distance education programs (including assessments of student learning outcomes, student retention, and student satisfaction) to ensure comparability to campus-based programs.

  The institution ensures the integrity of student work and the credibility of the degrees and credits it awards.

- **Library and Learning Resources**

  The institution ensures that students have access to and can effectively use appropriate library resources.

  The institution monitors whether students make appropriate use of learning resources.

  The institution provides laboratories, facilities, and equipment appropriate to the courses or programs.

- **Student Services**

  The institution provides adequate access to the range of student services appropriate to support the programs, including admissions, financial aid, academic advising, delivery of course materials, and placement and counseling.

  The institution provides an adequate means for resolving student complaints.

  The institution provides to students advertising, recruiting, and admissions information that adequately and accurately represents the programs, requirements, and services available.

  The institution ensures that students admitted possess the knowledge and equipment necessary to use the technology employed in the program, and provides technical assistance to students who are experiencing difficulty using the required technology.

- **Facilities and Finances**

  The institution possesses the equipment and technical expertise required for distance education.

The institution's long-range planning, budgeting, and policy development processes reflect the facilities, staffing, equipment and other resources essential to the viability and effectiveness of the distance education program.

- The Commission will utilize the North Central Association's Guidelines for Distance Learning in fulfilling its Constitutional and statutory duties, including review of new programs and review of applications for out-of-state programs and new private colleges.

Multi-state consortia provide yet another opportunity to broaden educational opportunities for Nebraskans through student exchange programs.

- The Commission and governing boards of postsecondary education institutions must make judgments regarding new programs and facilities based, in part, on knowledge of alternative opportunities for reasonable access. Reasonable access may mean access to a specific program that is available at another institution, in another sector, or in another state through the Midwestern Higher Education Commission Compact.

Cost of Education

Postsecondary education must also be financially accessible to Nebraskans. Many Nebraskans identify cost as the major barrier to postsecondary education. Yet, the state's financial resources are limited. As costs to institutions increase without a concurrent increase in state support, increased responsibility is placed on the students and their families to provide necessary resources through tuition and fees.

In comparison to some other states and certainly in comparison to private institutions, Nebraska public postsecondary education tuition and fees represent a true bargain. While the public may feel cost is a major barrier, and for many of the lowest income level that is true, cost in many circumstances is more a reconsideration of spending priorities. For the price of a new automobile, a student can gain a lifetime of benefit. While one might think high quality, life-time benefits should be available at little or no cost simply because tax dollars already support public postsecondary education, the Commission contends that is an unreasonable expectation. Even moderate tuition and fee increases will provide exceptional value considering the student is making an investment that will last a lifetime.

- It is the goal of the Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education to:
  - Encourage Nebraska citizens to see postsecondary education as a valuable, life-time investment.
  - Advocate financial assistance to financially needy students to improve access and help resolve many related issues.
  - Encourage access for Nebraska students to the Nebraska higher educational institution of their choice, and for which they are academically prepared.
  - Encourage Nebraska residents to seek postsecondary education within the state.

Obviously, financial aid can make a significant difference in whether financially-needy students can

participate in postsecondary education. The opportunity for postsecondary education is particularly vital to many of our state's financially needy who may otherwise see no way out of their financial situation and limited job options. The best financial aid strategies give needy students reasonable flexibility to select the most appropriate Nebraska postsecondary institution—public or private.

- Nebraska does not begin to provide adequate aid to the financially-needy students of the state. The students of Nebraska will be best served if the Coordinating Commission, postsecondary educational institutions, and state government leaders work together to assure that tuition policies, state funding and student financial aid programs are coordinated to assure that educational needs of Nebraska citizens, especially the financially needy, are met.

- The Commission sees money spent on financial aid for our state's financially needy as a means to provide positive options for individuals as well as to save the state money in the long run. It is far cheaper to provide financial aid that empowers individuals to achieve higher aspirations than to continue to increase funds for social services and build more prisons to accommodate those who, due in part to a lack of education, are unable to succeed within the mainstream of our society.

Chapter Five

Meet Needs

Introduction	Meeting Students' Needs	Meeting Employers' Needs	Meeting Citizens' Needs

Introduction

Meeting needs within a continually evolving state, nation and world requires flexibility, responsiveness and a willingness to change. It also demands prioritizing goals, as it is not possible to meet everyone's needs with limited public resources. Effective post-secondary education establishes priorities for three constituencies: students, employers, and citizens of the state.

Many of the changes the Commission proposes involve adjustments in programs and services that are driven by at least three trends. First, all schools are serving a population that is becoming increasingly diverse in age, race, and culture. Second, new technologies demand a population with stronger mathematics and science skills and stronger general education for learning how to use technology wisely. Third, with the end of the Cold War, the world may be more stable, but it is also more challenging with the emergence of a highly competitive global economy in a world of diverse cultures and needs.

All Nebraska postsecondary institutions exist to meet educational needs. The Commission believes this has led to efforts by some institutions to provide something for everyone.

- The Commission believes that as institutions evaluate existing instructional programs and propose new programs, it is imperative that they do so within the framework of priorities focused on the reality of limited resources.

- Institutions are advised to ensure that their instructional programs are exemplary within their role and mission, meet their institutional objectives, and serve the needs of the students and the state within available resources.

In this assurance process, the institutions and/or their governing boards may not be able to adopt every otherwise meritorious proposal presented to them.

- It is in the state's best interest if governing boards base their decisions regarding proposals for new programs, services and facilities on statewide needs, measurable outcomes and availability of resources. Although parochial interests are one measure of demand, they do not necessarily represent what is in the best interest of the institution and the state.

- The Commission applauds those governing boards who act responsibly as a caretaker of the public good.

Meeting Students' Needs

Students are the center of instructional planning. Access to and opportunity for success at all levels of postsecondary education are central to a postsecondary education system that meets needs. As more minority students and more non-traditional age students enter our institutions, institutions that truly meet needs adjust and relate to the changing student population's needs.

- Institutions are advised to broaden and improve their counseling, advising and support services to serve students more effectively, particularly the new population of students, many of whom are first-generation college students.

- The Commission supports peer tutoring and counseling programs as a means to provide one-on-one assistance for students. Tutoring can benefit all students at various points of their college careers.

- Governing boards are encouraged to maintain an institutional focus that will enhance openness and support for older, minority, disabled and other traditionally, under-represented populations.

- The Commission believes that students enrolled in our institutions must have the opportunity to take courses that properly prepare them for careers in their chosen fields as well as enable them to become constructive participants in our democratic society.

- The Commission urges colleges and universities to provide general education courses that prepare students to contribute constructively to our nation's social, economic and governmental framework; and relevant, targeted course work that prepares graduates for successful careers.

- The Commission foresees students leaving Nebraska's colleges and universities with demonstrated competencies in challenging and relevant educational programs. Good mathematics and science skills are particularly important if our students and our nation are to compete successfully in a global society.

- Institutions are also advised to provide learning support systems including accessible libraries and computer labs, modern equipment, and adequate facilities that nurture a learning environment. Also critical to this nurturing

environment are faculty who are accessible, and academic support services such as tutoring labs and assessment centers.

The Commission recognizes that in a period of limited resources, it has become necessary that many institutions become selective in scheduling courses. Institutions cannot afford to offer every course every term. Unfortunately, this can result in an increase in the number of terms it takes a student to graduate. From the students' viewpoint, this keeps them from graduating in the traditional four-year period and entering into the labor market.

- Institutions need to examine means to become more flexible in their graduation requirements, such as allowing alternative classes and prerequisites, if they are going to more severely limit course availability.

- The Commission's intent is not to reduce graduation standards but to provide reasonable, equivalent alternatives that will address students' needs to meet graduation requirements within the traditional four-year period.

- Neighboring institutions are encouraged to cooperate with each other whenever possible to schedule courses so that when one offers the course, the other one might not. Such exchanges truly put students' needs at the forefront.

No career field will be exempt from an increasing focus on international issues. All students will need an international perspective in their field of study. Global awareness also means that our students must strive to become competitive on a world scale.

- Our students must be prepared to become good citizens of the world. Institutions can promote an international focus through courses in languages; geography; international studies including history, politics, and economics; and activities that increase cultural and international awareness.

We live in a world where literacy is increasingly measured by the number of languages a person speaks, what technology the person understands, and whether behavior is sensitive to the cultures of others.

- Our students must be competent in languages in addition to English, as well as in the sciences, mathematics, humanities, and the many other subjects relevant to a global society.

Services which the institution offers to support and enhance the quality of student life are fundamental to the college experience. Boards are responsible for this aspect of the welfare of students and need to ensure that the institution provides adequate student activities and services within the ability of their resources. These services may include such elements as student centers, counseling, career planning and placement, minority/non-traditional student programs, cultural centers, and student government.

- The Commission advises institutions to monitor the type and quality of student services, as well as the proportion of expenditures spent on student services, to ensure that the services do not decline over the years, especially if there is a need for more student support for the institution to be competitive and comply with the goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

- Some institutions may be concerned that such services are costly and would exist at the expense of instruction. The Commission believes it is more important that institutions maintain their commitment to student success by focused instructional programming than to offer too many programs with less student success.

Our institutions also have a responsibility to their students that goes beyond the classroom. Students have a right to expect a campus environment that promotes a healthy lifestyle and is both safe and drug-free. Each campus can provide services and programs toward this goal.

- The personal safety of students on our campuses is a concern throughout all of postsecondary education. The Commission supports and encourages efforts to ensure that campuses are free of illegal drugs and violence.

Both human and fiscal resources dictate that the state cannot meet everyone's postsecondary needs. Nebraska's participation in consortia will allow Nebraskans to enroll in programs in other states at reasonable cost and, at the same time, bring other students into our state for programs in which we specialize.

- The Commission recommends that Nebraska institutions actively participate in educational consortia that provide a reasonable means to increase educational opportunities for the people of the state.

Meeting Employers' Needs

Central to the Commission's vision is the belief that postsecondary education should contribute to the prosperity of Nebraska's economy. Citizens use postsecondary education to prepare for future jobs. Professions and businesses look to the postsecondary institutions for responsible, skilled, and creative employees and colleagues. Cooperation and communication between educators and employers will help assure these two expectations are met.

Postsecondary education plays a key role in Nebraska's economic development. Development of human resources is the framework that strengthens effective organizations. Postsecondary education provides the means toward career success and personal satisfaction. Responsive postsecondary education also draws new businesses to our state and assists new and existing businesses within the state.

The economy in some rural areas, as well as in inner-city metropolitan areas, requires

particular attention.

- Through cooperative efforts with rural and urban centers, together with minority leaders and businesses, postsecondary educational institutions can help encourage new businesses and maintain existing businesses that support local economies.

Postsecondary education also provides a vital service through technology transfer from institutional research to businesses within and outside our state. Not only do commercial interests profit, but also the state, through a strengthened economy and increased competitiveness.

- Employers want to hire people who have skills required in the work place. Postsecondary education must provide relevant course work and capable graduates who meet employers' needs for skilled, professional and knowledgeable employees.

- Postsecondary education institutions can assist employee retraining and upgrading programs within their institutional role and mission. Such programs can be developed by both private and public institutions as in-house training, training in cooperation with industry associations, and customized training programs offered on the campus.

- Postsecondary educational institutions will serve the state's economic development goals by providing human resource development and assistance to new and small businesses, particularly those that are minority-owned or located in rural Nebraska communities.

- To succeed in today's global economy, Nebraska's businesses and industries need employees who understand other countries' cultures, languages, economics and politics. Postsecondary education institutions can work with employers to provide courses, workshops and other activities that increase cultural and international awareness.

- The Commission supports the transfer of research-produced technology from our institutions to benefit the state's businesses.

Meeting Citizens' Needs

Postsecondary educational institutions, through their public service missions, can and do serve many needs of Nebraskans. Foremost among these needs is the knowledge necessary for our citizens to make informed decisions about the many complex public issues that challenge contemporary society. Higher education has an important role to play as a resource for public policy analysis and research as well as a resource for citizen education about public issues.

- Rural Nebraskans particularly need increased access to educational

programming, services, technologies, and expertise that will help their businesses and communities compete and stay abreast of changes that will impact them. Postsecondary education institutions can facilitate access to educational, technological, and cultural opportunities in rural areas to the extent their resources permit.

- As increasing numbers of non-English speaking persons enter our state, English as a Second Language, citizenship courses, and other educational programs are needed to help them successfully participate in our society.

- Illiteracy is a problem within our state as it is throughout the nation. Illiteracy limits both the quality of life of many of our citizens and the productivity of our state's work force. Postsecondary education, and community colleges in particular, must help address this issue by providing accessible literacy programs throughout the state.

- Adequate health care, especially to rural areas, is a critical issue which postsecondary education can help resolve through health education services accessible throughout the state. As a part of this solution, the University of Nebraska Medical Center can continue to actively recruit and train professionals who want to serve rural areas.

- The escalating cost of health care is another issue that demands the attention of the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

- The protection of our environment is another critical issue facing Nebraskans along with all citizens of the world. Postsecondary education can provide leadership in both public education, to inform citizens of the issues; and research, to discover better ways to protect our environment.

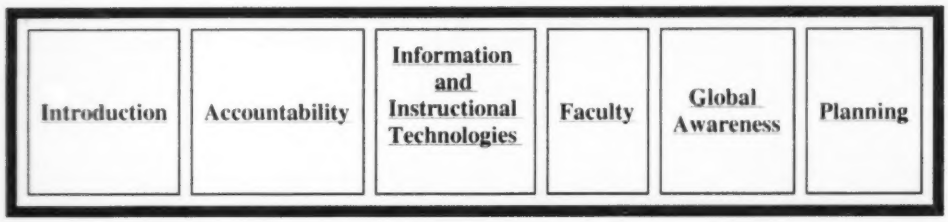
Postsecondary educational institutions also make Nebraskans' lives more satisfying through the many cultural opportunities they supply or bring to the state.

- Museums, performing arts centers, speaker programs and other such activities which provide valuable services and resources for the state's citizens deserve postsecondary education's support.

- Preparing Nebraska's students and citizens for global opportunities and competition requires introducing an international perspective into institutions, faculties, programs and activities.

Chapter Six

Create Exemplary Educational Institutions



Introduction

The Commission believes Nebraskans want their state to have an exemplary postsecondary education system. Exemplary suggests achieving such high quality that the system becomes a model for others to emulate.

- The Commission believes that success in building an exemplary educational system requires steadfast commitment to our students and their education; prioritization of efforts within teaching, research and public service; interdisciplinary efforts within education that make the most efficient use of resources; and accountability through measurable outcomes appropriate to each institution's specific role and mission.

- The Commission encourages the state's colleges and universities to regularly assess their basic assumptions about Nebraska's people, their needs, their schools, and their resources. The Commission will assist by sharing pragmatic information about changing demographic, economic and societal conditions as well as academic information about when, how, and why schools succeed and states prosper.

- The faculty, staff, students, administrators and governing boards of postsecondary educational institutions have primary responsibility for maintaining and strengthening the quality of their institutions.

Whether Nebraska's high school students with the highest ability remain in Nebraska for postsecondary education is one test of whether they perceive Nebraska's institutions as exemplary. Currently, a disproportionate number of the students leaving the state are high achievers. Nebraska can reverse this trend through exemplary institutions that attract Nebraska's most qualified students.

Accountability

Outcomes can be a positive vehicle to help sell the excellence of each institution and specific departments within the institution. The Commission believes that knowledge of outcomes, such as job placement rates of graduates, can attract students to institutions within our state.

- The Commission urges each public institution of postsecondary education to evaluate measurable outcomes appropriate to its role and mission. Accountability of the institutions and of their administrations includes appropriate measurable outcomes that indicate quality. The following may be appropriate outcomes measures depending on the role and mission of the institution and the program:

    - ***Student retention*** . . . such as the percent of matriculating students who return as sophomores.
    - ***Graduation levels*** . . . the percentage of degree-seeking students who actually graduate.
    - ***Advancement*** . . . the percent of graduating students who pursue further education.
    - ***Job placement rates*** . . . the percent of graduating students who obtain jobs commensurate with their college preparation.
    - ***Outstanding performance*** . . . students, faculty, administrators, programs, services, and innovations in instruction, research and public service that are recognized by peers, the public, or professional organizations as meritorious examples.
    - ***Quality of teaching*** . . . measured by evaluation by students, graduates, employers, etc.
    - ***Research*** . . . measured by research funds flowing into institutions, use of research in the classroom, and regard by peers.
    - ***Public Service*** . . . measured by quality and quantity of public service projects and evaluation by recipients and participants.
    - ***Ability to attract students*** . . . such as the number of students who come to the institution from out-of-state and from out-of-the-country.
    - ***Satisfaction*** . . . based on evaluation surveys from students, alumni, the public, and employers.

- Increased use of information technologies will encourage the development of additional methods to measure student learning outcomes.

- The Commission and institutions, where appropriate, can build outcomes data bases to adapt to measures of student progress.

- Accountability includes institutional evaluation of the administrative leadership of each institution. The Commission believes the management structures at the

sector and institutional levels should be efficient and effective, and that administrators should exhibit flexibility in adapting to Nebraska's demographics and changing environment.

Information and Instructional Technologies

Expanded use of distance learning and other instructional technologies is a key strategy in broadening access to postsecondary education and life-long learning for Nebraska citizens and in improving learning and teaching processes throughout the state's higher education institutions. In addition to meeting student needs and improving access to postsecondary education, expanded use of instructional technologies also provides a tool that helps our institutions to change and become more effective, more efficient, more comprehensive, and more student-centered.

In addition, the expanded use of information technologies, including data processing hardware, software and other services, can improve learning, teaching and other key processes of higher education institutions. Virtually every key process and program within higher education ultimately will involve the use of information technology.

- The Commission proposes that the state and its postsecondary education institutions commit to using information technologies that will help them become more effective, more efficient, more relevant and more student-centered.

- Expanded use of informational technologies will greatly expand the information resources available to students and faculty and can lead to increases in learning and teaching productivity.

- Each institution is encouraged to develop and update regularly standards for instructional and other information technologies based on best practice guidelines, such as those developed by the North Central Association and other such regional and national associations. In addition, institutions are encouraged to share their descriptions of standards with other institutions in the state.

- The University of Nebraska, State Colleges and Community Colleges are encouraged to set appropriate expectations and requirements for students and faculty regarding the use of information technologies.

- Institutions are encouraged to use instructional technologies as a way to increase learning productivity including effective use of student-centered and self-paced learning activities.

- Institutions are encouraged to use exemplary instructional technology programs that are purchased from or shared by other organizations in addition to programs developed by people associated with each institution.

- Institutions are encouraged to consider the option of outsourcing various information system operations.

Faculty

Attracting, nurturing, and retaining high quality faculty, administrators, and other staff are additional components of an exemplary educational system. Evaluations, promotions, competitive salaries, professional development opportunities and

appropriate recognition for achievement can encourage and motivate faculty and staff.

- Each institution needs to assure that its faculty members are well prepared to teach through its hiring qualifications, professional development opportunities, on-going evaluations and clearly set expectations for achievement in the classroom and, when appropriate, in areas of research, scholarship and other creative activity.

- The Commission encourages and supports efforts to motivate faculty and staff to high levels of achievement. Adequate resources, facilities, salaries and professional development opportunities are important to these efforts.

While faculty roles may change as a result of new instructional technologies, faculty will remain central to the learning process. To insure optimum usage of instructional technologies, educators must have the training and institutional support necessary to infuse technology into the teaching process in order to maximize students' learning potential. Investment by the state and the institutions in faculty training and program development will encourage the adoption and effective use on our campuses of new learning and instructional technologies.

- Institutions are encouraged to provide supportive environments and professional development opportunities that allow faculty to acquire the technical skills needed to utilize fully new learning and instructional technologies in the classroom and lab.

- Institutions are urged to develop faculty reward structures that encourage faculty to embrace new learning technologies and to share their ideas for the successful development and use of new learning and instructional technologies with other faculty and institutions.

The Commission acknowledges that distance learning instructional technologies are not the sole answer for all geographic access issues. Obviously, there is a great value to the learning environment of a college campus that distance learning technologies cannot offer. Instructional technologies will not lead to the demise of the classroom or the campus. Instead, college students and faculty may choose from a spectrum of learning environments from the traditional to the innovative. The new technologies open many doors of access that would otherwise remain shut due to geographical distances and/or limited state resources.

- For instructional technologies to become more effective as an educational tool, the Commission believes educators must find methods to sustain the culture and contacts of an educational campus within the new technology. Faculty must be extensively involved in this process.

Institutions will provide a broader, more progressive and less biased education if students associate with faculty, staff and peers who represent differing races, cultures, ages and genders. Additionally, the substance of education can provide an international and multi-cultural perspective. For instance, a student of literature is deprived of much great writing and thought if only exposed to the works of British and American writers.

- Students will solve problems more creatively when they consider opinions and

alternatives that represent differing races, cultures, ages and genders.

- Diversity in faculty, staff, administrators, student bodies and curriculum will help our institutions become more exemplary and our state become more competitive.

Global Awareness

Exemplary education prepares students for the world in which they will live and work.

- Global awareness is critical for every education system today. Faculty should be encouraged to bring a focus on global awareness into classes and activities.

- Faculty development plans that focus on understanding other countries and cultures deserve high priority.

Planning

Good planning is instrumental to exemplary institutions so they can respond positively to changes. The improvement of quality as a major long-range goal requires that campus expenditure patterns reflect the role and mission approved by the Commission and the educational priorities established by the governing boards. All planning must ultimately provide the opportunity for high quality learning by every student. Commission review of master plans from the state's postsecondary educational institutions can help the institutions plan for the future in a coordinated manner.

- The Commission relies on governance and administration within Nebraska institutions to provide creative, efficient and flexible leadership and planning that will help institutions achieve exemplary status.

- Information technologies offer institutions the opportunity to share high quality programs and outstanding teachers with one another. Such exchanges will broaden and enrich the educational experience of students at more institutions and provide greater efficiency in use of the state's resources.

Chapter Seven

Create Partnerships

Educational Bridges	Sharing Technologies for Greater Efficiency and Effectiveness	Linkages with Businesses and Communities

Educational Bridges

Learning continues throughout life. Thus the Commission sees education as a seamless continuum from pre-school through graduate school that sets the stage for lifelong learning.

- An integrated system of education must have specific policies and partnerships between educational sectors and institutions.

- A foremost policy is that education through postsecondary levels become more "portable" to facilitate access. This transferability means that students can participate in a continuum of opportunities, each flowing smoothly toward the other, vertically and horizontally.

Education does not exist in a vacuum. Nor do the many levels of education function well when isolated from one another. All will thrive best when partnerships are carefully developed between them and with other aspects of Nebraska life.

Exemplary postsecondary education depends on an alliance with the elementary and secondary schools. Students, in particular, will profit when each institution and school understands the programs at other levels.

- Postsecondary educational institutions are encouraged to inform secondary school administrators, teachers and counselors of their programs, services and expectations of entering students.

- Postsecondary educational institutions are encouraged to inform secondary school administrators and counselors about the academic performance of recent graduates of the high school in college courses. Institutions need to provide information of sufficient detail to enable the high school to evaluate its

effectiveness in preparing students for postsecondary education and to modify its curriculum, if necessary, to improve student achievement.

- The Commission encourages postsecondary educational institutions to develop programs that offer assistance, if requested, to any high school in its service area that seeks to evaluate its curriculum and to improve its effectiveness in preparing students for college courses. The program could be a collaborative effort between high school teachers and college faculty.

Some high school students demonstrate the academic skills and maturity that signal a readiness for college-level courses. Collaborative efforts between institutions and schools to provide challenging educational opportunities for academically gifted students represent sound educational practice and efficient use of public resources.

- The Commission supports programs which provide college-level academic transfer courses for academically qualified high school students. Such programs expand educational opportunities for capable high school students and result in more efficient use of educational resources.

    - The Commission supports the use of programs that provide opportunities for high school students to earn college credits and that provide external validation of student academic achievement at the college level. An example of this kind of program is the College Board's Advanced Placement Program.

    - The Commission also supports programs that allow qualified high school students to enroll along with college students in courses offered on college and university campuses.

    - If those two options are not feasible, colleges and universities are encouraged to offer college-level academic courses in the high school in close collaboration with the high school. The instruction may be by traditional classroom delivery, by instructional technology, or by some combination of the two. Such courses would promote equality of educational opportunity throughout the state. Student eligibility, course curriculum, access to instructional materials, student performance evaluation, and faculty qualifications and selection process should be equivalent to those for courses offered on the college campus.

Nebraska's independent colleges and universities and private career institutions are valuable educational resources to the state.

- The Coordinating Commission shall promote more dialogue with private postsecondary colleges and universities and private career schools to create and sustain positive working relationships between postsecondary institutions.

Communication and cooperation partnerships should move beyond Nebraska's borders. This will expand educational options for Nebraskans and at the same time bring out-of-state students into the state, which may help increase diversity on Nebraska's campuses.

- Nebraska should support compacts with other states and regions to help enable each other to meet common educational challenges.

- The Commission endorses participation by all Nebraska public postsecondary institutions in the Midwestern Higher Education Commission Compact to the extent that is appropriate to their role and mission and available resources.

Sharing Technologies for Greater Efficiency and Effectiveness

Effective use of information and instructional technologies in many cases will be advanced through collaborative activities and sometimes through participation in formal networks.

The policies of the state need to support and encourage the use of productive information and instructional technologies within higher education. The Nebraska Information Technology Commission (NITC) can help serve as a vehicle for the planning and coordination of information technology issues within the state of Nebraska. The NITC's responsibilities include prioritizing educational needs that could be met cost effectively through the use of information technology, recommending a plan for funding projects to address identified needs, and adopting policies and guidelines for acceptable cost-effective use of information technology in education.

- The Commission views instructional technologies as an educational and public service function of the Community Colleges, State Colleges and University of Nebraska, and encourages these sectors to work together through the NITC to provide the best possible access to education by all citizens of Nebraska.

    - Through the NITC, postsecondary educational institutions can share their individual technology plans and standards, explore methods to cooperate in the development and use of informational and instructional technology, and develop joint plans for addressing "These partnerships also will serve to bridge gaps within the state between east and west, cities and rural communities, rich and poor, educated and under-educated."current and future educational needs through the use of new technologies.

    - The Commission urges the NITC to help create and maintain a plan for the development and use of computer and telecommunications systems that will benefit education at all levels throughout the state.

    - The Commission will work with the NITC to help identify information technology priorities for higher education through a process that considers the objectives of the statewide technology plans, the individual institution's goals and plans, the needs of the student and faculty, the use of existing "best practices," and the overall effectiveness and cost efficiency of the proposed project.

    - The NITC, with representatives from both higher education and K/12 education,

provides an excellent vehicle for promoting articulation and cooperation among postsecondary education institutions as well as between postsecondary education and K/12. The Commission encourages the NITC to explore new initiatives that effectively utilize instructional technologies to share expertise, improve articulation, expand learning opportunities, and help create a more "seamless" educational system for the citizens of our state.

The rapidly expanding use of new instructional technologies makes cooperative ventures with institutions and entities from outside of the state as critical as those with institutions within the state. Cooperative, technology-based projects, including in-state projects such as the NITC, as well as multi-state initiatives such as the Western Governors University and the Midwest Higher Education Commission, have the potential to bring beneficial programs to the state, to save our state and its students money, and to encourage an increase in reciprocity and articulation agreements that will expand education opportunities.

- The Commission encourages the state of Nebraska and its public and private postsecondary education institutions to collaborate and cooperate with entities such as the Western Governors University to increase access to postsecondary education and enhance educational opportunities within our state. Nebraska institutions will benefit from participation and/or cooperation with entities, such as the Western Governors University, that allow them to expand their own markets across state lines to new student populations, while also importing the expertise of other institutions to broaden the learning experiences of Nebraska students.

- Effective student services are critical to the success of many students, no matter if it is a traditional residential college or university of a "virtual university."

    - The Commission endorses the WGU's use of local centers throughout participating states to provide student assessment, advising and other student support services at the community level. These local centers will be student-centered and designed to meet the potential needs of a variety of students.

Linkages with Businesses and Communities

The Commission believes partnerships between postsecondary educational institutions and businesses, agencies, and communities hold great promise for Nebraska. Coalitions formed by a wide range of leaders can help guide institutions to educate and/or train students for the economic and social realities they will encounter. Community level partnerships can include joint planning, collaborative research, and cooperative education and training programs. The Commission can be a catalyst for such collaboration to aid positive reactions to new and continuing challenges.

- Postsecondary institutions are advised to continue to explore how they can serve other constituencies, such as agriculture, business, government agencies, cultural and recreation groups, community organizations, and families.

The baby boom generation, which is the predominant age group within our state and nation, is now approaching middle-age. For the next several years, the state's work force will increasingly be made up of middle-aged and older workers. Many of

these workers will need to return to college for additional education, training and retraining to meet demands of the changing work place or to enter into new careers as the job market shifts. Nebraska's postsecondary educational institutions and employers must collaborate to assure that such training is accessible, affordable and relevant to the changing job market.

- To assure Nebraska's postsecondary institutions are helping the state's workforce development and serving the students needs, its imperative that appropriate courses translate into marketable skills and conceptual thinking. This includes credit programs leading to degrees as well as short-term, continuing education programs that assist in retraining and upgrading workers.

- The Commission anticipates that postsecondary education, in particular community colleges, will continually explore how to efficiently deliver more educational services in the work place.

Postsecondary education is intimately tied to the economic development of the state. With 13 public colleges and universities, 17 independent colleges and universities and dozens of private career schools, postsecondary educational institutions pump millions of dollars into local economies simply by the impact of the institutions' payrolls. When considering the purchases made by students, local economies are enriched by many more millions of dollars which, by the multiplier effect, translate postsecondary education as a major economic force in Nebraska. In addition, Nebraska postsecondary educational institutions are a causal factor for tax revenue at all levels.

In another context, institutions can communicate with community and business leaders and with one another about economic and social issues. Through the transfer of technology produced by research at our institutions, postsecondary education can help businesses remain competitive and on the cutting edge of new and emerging technologies. Here also, telecommunications can facilitate partnerships between education and business that hold great promise.

- The Commission endorses linkages between academic research at our institutions and industrial research within the state to the extent that staff and institutional integrity is not compromised.

- Representatives of postsecondary education and business need to further explore telecommunications as a means of meeting business training needs, providing educational opportunities at the work site, and facilitating transfer of technology between education and business.

- The Commission appreciates and supports the relationship between the State Department of Economic Development and postsecondary educational institutions. The Commission offers to assist to enhance the effectiveness of the relationships between the institutions and the DED, and serve the needs of the state.

- The Commission endorses partnerships between postsecondary education and nonprofit organizations, which have increasing responsibility for meeting social, economic and cultural needs of our citizens.

Chapter Eight

Operate High Quality Institutions Within the Context of Limited Resources

Introduction	**Program Review**	**Budget Review**
Incentive Fund Policy	**Recommended Tuition & Financial Aid Guidelines**	**Facilities Planning, Authorization & Funding**

Introduction

Nebraska's postsecondary educational institutions have the confidence of the Commission. Therefore, the Commission has high expectations of them. The Commission believes that governing boards also have high regard for both what their institutions have accomplished and what they are capable of accomplishing.

For many years, governing boards have sought to do more with less. Regrettably, the Commission offers no panacea for limited institutional resources. The total of all of our educational wants and needs is beyond the capacity of the available resources.

- Postsecondary educational leaders are encouraged to focus on the effective and efficient utilization and management of limited educational resources for purposes of attaining optimal educational results.

- Institutions will become more exemplary by prioritization, refinement and a shifting of resources by design. They must maximize their effectiveness and ensure academic, societal and fiscal accountability. To do so will require questioning of basic assumptions and traditions about needs and service.

The roles and missions of each educational institution and how they weave together to serve postsecondary educational needs in Nebraska have been addressed in this Comprehensive Plan. The Commission calls on institutions to examine their programs, budgets, and facility plans within the context of role and mission and the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. As they do this, the institutions may discover that there has been some unintentional slippage from their assigned role and mission. With the dawning of the Comprehensive Plan for postsecondary education in Nebraska comes an excellent opportunity for institutions to undergo a reexamination to

determine priorities and focus on the appropriate roles and missions.

Through the Commission's statutory responsibilities to review and approve instructional programs, to review and modify or recommend modification of institutions' budgets to the Legislature and Governor, and to review and approve capital construction projects, the Commission has the ability to facilitate achievement of the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. The Commission prefers, however, that institutions take this responsibility upon themselves through their own program review, budget development and facility planning.

When funding for postsecondary education shifts drastically up and down in a yo-yo effect from one year to the next, long-range planning and overall efficiency suffer. The Commission recognizes the state itself is susceptible to fluctuating revenues as it is pushed and pulled by economic forces over which it has little control.

- It is important that the postsecondary educational institutions have a stable funding platform upon which they can plan.

- It is important, to the extent that the executive and legislative branches can provide, that the institutions have some basis of assurance of their priority in the state's spending plan.

- Postsecondary educational funding should reflect the commitment of the legislative and executive branches to achieve the educational goals set forth in this Comprehensive Plan.

- Postsecondary educational funding should be sufficient enough to provide salaries and professional development opportunities that will attract and retain high quality faculty and staff at our institutions.

- Institutions are encouraged to bolster efforts to attract outside funds, private as well as public. Examples include attracting public and private funds for specific job training activities which enhance the state's workforce development and help lessen unemployment. Attracting funds in support and recognition of exemplary teaching also enhances an institution's reputation within the educational community.

- Institutions need to include provisions for funding fluctuations in their strategic plans in order to more effectively deal with fluctuations when they do occur.

Program Review

Instructional programs are at the core of all postsecondary educational institutions regardless of the strength of their research or public service roles. Regular review of these programs is vital to our institutions if they are to offer strong, exemplary

programs that serve needs. Governing boards of each institution are responsible for this review to ensure quality, determine that needs are met, and to set priorities for budgets. However, the Coordinating Commission, with its responsibility for program review and authority to continue or discontinue instructional programs, can direct postsecondary education toward the goals set forth in this Comprehensive Plan.

- The Commission believes that programs that cannot be maintained at sufficiently high quality with achievement of other outcomes at an acceptable cost must be abandoned to allow for strengthening of exemplary programs and creation of needed new programs. Institutions that spread themselves too thinly, risk performing tasks inadequately. Some of these tasks are better performed by others.

- Exemplary program planning demands elimination of existing instructional programs which are marginal in terms of outcomes and centrality to instructional role and mission.

- The Commission expects focused attention by governing boards to exert leadership to discontinue inviable programs and to reformulate marginal programs toward goal achievement.

- Governing boards are asked to take the initiative to review their programs within the context of compliance with role and mission and the goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

- While some extension of programming may be reasonable, the Commission expects institutional leaders to propose only those new programs that are appropriate to role and mission, meet the needs of students, and advance the goals of the state within this Comprehensive Plan.

- Program review must serve as a fulcrum to balance the access needs of the citizens and the employee skill needs of employers with the resource capabilities of the institutions and the state.

- Program review must evaluate the need for public institutions' instructional programs in light of programs available in the private sector, other states and through telecommunications technology.

- The Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education and postsecondary education's institutional leadership must avoid unnecessary program duplication and must deter unnecessary proliferation of new program offerings.

- Programming and course work delivered to Nebraska via distance learning technology from institutions located in other states will come under Commission review only when such institutions offer one or more courses for college credit on an established schedule at locations other than the students' place of

residence or a business that is offering course work for their own employees.

- The Coordinating Commission will not erect unnecessary hurdles that interfere with programs designed to meet short-term job training needs.

Budget Review

In addition to program review, the budget process is an important state-level strategy to address priorities and implement efficiency improvements. The ultimate goal of reexamining priorities and improving efficiency is to realign resources to those services and activities most important to postsecondary education's mission and to seek effective use of funds.

The Commission does not envision less money spent on postsecondary education. The Commission does foresee spending money somewhat differently than in the past. We cannot expect continuation of everything institutions now provide at the level of quality we must demand to become exemplary.

- Within the reality of limited resources, institutional quality can be maintained and enhanced through a reallocation of resources.

- To provide exemplary institutions within the context of limited resources, institutions are counseled to identify priorities based on role and mission; needs; and financial, human and physical resources. Institutions will become stronger and achieve goals that reflect an exemplary condition when budgeting and programming decisions accurately reflect their priorities.

- To obtain productive use of available resources, the Commission recommends that postsecondary educational institution's governing boards:

    - Incorporate an institutional organization that emphasizes educational delivery over administration.

    - Explore technologies that enhance learning while delivering it more efficiently.

    - Demand accountability through measurable student outcomes; management review based on performance evaluation of faculty and staff; and systematic assessment of financial and resource needs, allocation and results at each institution.

- Shifting of resources within postsecondary education is necessary to accommodate specific goals set forth in this plan. By setting specific priorities upon which to base their plans and budgets, institutions will accomplish long-term objectives.

- As resources become more limited, commitments to statewide goals such as

racial and cultural diversity should not be reduced.

Academic support services include key learning resources, most conspicuously the library and computer equipment, as well as a host of other activities which promote the academic mission of the institution. Academic activities depend on support services to be effective. When resource shortages occur, budgets are too often balanced at their expense.

- Institutions are advised to monitor the percentage of total expenditures devoted to academic support services to maintain balance that yields effective instruction.

Essential to development and maintenance of quality is effective strategic planning. It is decidedly easier, of course, to plan for quality if there are no fiscal constraints. It is evident, however, that Nebraska's postsecondary institutions must plan to operate for the foreseeable future under conditions of rather severe fiscal constraints.

- Governing boards can assure that their planning, management and decision-making processes are structured to achieve goals and objectives.

The Commission will tend to give favorable consideration to promising budget proposals which improve higher educational opportunities and effectiveness through the following methods:

- Beneficial use of information technologies.

- Beneficial collaborative activities with other institutions and networks of organizations.

While the Commission can influence priorities and efficiency improvement through its various statewide review authorities, identifying and implementing specific efficiency improvements ultimately depends upon efforts of governing boards, campuses, academic and administrative units, and individual faculty and staff members. It requires commitment and involvement at all levels within postsecondary education.

- To become more efficient, governing boards need to seek, whenever and wherever possible, to reduce and/or eliminate unnecessary duplication in program offerings and in all operations of public institutions.

- Administrative duplication or excess is a drain on scarce resources. Since administrative expenditures do not directly produce instruction, research or public service outcomes, administrative functions can best be evaluated in terms of their support for the primary functions relative to the resources they require.

Budget development and efficiency are clearly related. Efficiency improvement resulting in cost-savings makes these resources available for use in implementing postsecondary educational priorities. Thus, efficiency improvements can be viewed as a source of funds in the budgeting process.

- The Commission believes expanded budget requests should be formulated with an emphasis on specific outcomes to recognize and promote excellence in teaching, support goals that promote diversity and equity, monitor faculty workload, and continue efforts to identify efficiencies that can be achieved with existing resources.

- To maintain exemplary institutions, it is incumbent upon governing boards and administrators to provide and maintain competitive salaries, adequate libraries, and sufficient equipment and facilities to provide an appropriate learning environment.

- The Commission cautions that dormitories, student centers, food services, and other auxiliary operations which are created and operated as independent, self-supporting entities should not be a drain on institutional resources.

- The use of new technologies in non-instructional areas, such as library automation and the electronic distribution of transcripts, can facilitate increased efficiency among administrative functions.

- This plan includes recommendations for community colleges to assume primary responsibility for most developmental education. Limited new state funds and a reallocation of existing state funds is needed to implement this developmental effort.

An institution's financial condition relates to the assets and liabilities of the institution at a moment in time. The assets must be adequate for the institution to fulfill its mission, while the liabilities must not become a barrier to that mission.

An increasingly important factor in an institution's financial condition is debt management. Debt can provide the leverage required to obtain needed assets, such as new buildings and equipment, and to make investments in the future. However, debt obligations can also constrain future initiatives by restricting available funds for new ventures and increasing the cost of capital.

- Institutions need to determine their optimal debt level by analyzing the impact of borrowing on current and future operating costs. Debt service (principal and interest), as well as recurring maintenance costs of new facilities, must be estimated and built into future operating budgets.

Incentive Fund Policy

The Commission sees incentive funds as a valid basis upon which to achieve outcomes.

- The Commission supports the concept of incentive funding which facilitates initiatives in compliance with the goals of the Comprehensive Plan or facilitates

achievement of the Commission's coordinative functions.

- Institutions of higher education might be challenged to expend informational technologies within their normal operating budgets. A state incentive grant fund could help with the training of faculty in the use of informational technologies as well as the development and purchase of instructional programs using informational technologies.

Recommended Tuition and Financial Aid Guidelines

In comparison to other states, Nebraska has experienced and benefited from a high rate of participation in postsecondary education. This high participation has been a positive factor for the state and will continue to be critical to Nebraska's future. The Commission concludes the existing relationship between public monies (state appropriation and, in the case of community colleges, property taxes), tuition and financial aid generally has been successful in promoting access to postsecondary education.

- Adjustments in funding relationships may be necessary to maintain the high participation rate in postsecondary education and at the same time enable the institutions to maintain a level of operation which assures that students have the opportunity to achieve their academic goals.

- Future changes in the structure and/or responsibility of the sectors may be another reason for considering reallocation of funds, changes in the method of state support, or new tuition levels. Likewise, changes in national educational programs and/or policies could also bring about changes in tuition and state appropriations.

In a situation where all revenue sources in support of education are being considered, it is appropriate that increased tuition and fees be among the options. Excessively low tuition and fees may yield inadequate resources to appropriately pay faculty, maintain facilities and provide equipment and technology necessary to prepare students for competition in the global economy.

- Incremental changes in tuition and fees, for undergraduate, graduate and non-resident students, are appropriate. Such changes may result from changes in an institution's operating budget, and/or may be related to changes in the higher education price index, in the consumer price index within the institution's service area, or in tuition levels within peer groups.

    - The Commission supports the policy that each public institution reaps the benefit of retaining the revenue from increased tuition and fees and enrollment increases.

    - Conversely, if enrollment declines, the Commission believes that institutions should recognize that accompanying declines in tuition

and fee revenues may not automatically be replaced by state resources.

- Consideration should be given that tuition and financial aid recommendations not have the effect of denying access to students who are qualified to take advantage of the unique programs and opportunities which may only be available at a particular institution of higher education in the state.

- The Commission and the institutions should monitor the impact of increases in tuition on participation in postsecondary education. Any increases in tuition and fees other than the most marginal would call for stronger financial aid programs to assure that needy full-time and part-time students are provided educational options. The Coordinating Commission will work with state government and postsecondary educational leaders to establish that tuition policies, state funding and student financial aid programs meet the educational needs of Nebraska citizens, especially the financially needy.

Institutional role and mission is a basis upon which numerous distinctions may be made, including distinctions concerning tuition levels.

- The Commission favors tuition and fee rates which fall at a level within each sector that is appropriate to that sector's role and mission.

    - Community colleges will have the lowest tuition of the three sectors, as they will remain the sector with the broadest access. To keep community college tuition at a level that encourages public access, it may be necessary for community colleges to receive increased state support.

    - The State Colleges, which have a role and mission focusing on undergraduate and limited graduate-degree education, will have the mid-range level of tuition and fees of the three sectors. Tuition levels at these regional institutions will be maintained at levels which continue to encourage access to the citizens of their regions.

    - The University campuses, having both more comprehensive and more differentiated missions which encompass research, medicine and extensive graduate-level programming, will have the highest and most differentiated tuition rate of the three sectors, based on each institution's role and mission.

- When considering the responsibility of the state as compared to the student in funding public postsecondary education, the Commission believes the majority of the cost of education should be borne by the public. Differentiations exist from institution to institution and sector to sector with regard to the amount of money the state contributes for a student's education through public monies, as compared to the amount the student contributes through tuition and

mandatory fees. This differentiation should reflect the differing roles and missions of the institutions, as stated above. In determining appropriate shares of the cost of education, the Commission will clearly define which educational costs should be included. The Commission supports the following differentiations:

- At the community colleges, the students' share of their educational costs in comparison to the taxpayers' share of the cost of education, through state appropriation and local property tax combined, should be the lowest of the three public sectors.

- At the State Colleges, the students' share of the total cost of their education should be more than the students' share at community colleges. However, the state's share of the total cost of education at State Colleges should still be substantially larger than the students' share.

- Students at campuses of the University of Nebraska should pay a greater share of the cost of their education than students at the State Colleges and community colleges. Since the roles and missions of the University of Nebraska's four campuses differ from one another, the state's share of contribution to total educational costs at each campus should differ appropriately based on role and mission.

- In setting recommended guidelines for rational and equitable tuition levels at public institutions in the state, consideration will be given to the following factors:

  - The role and mission of the institution

  - Comparisons with tuition and fees at peer institutions

  - Comparisons with regional institutions with which the particular institution competes for students

  - Inflation rates, both Consumer Price Index (CPI) and Higher Education Price Index (HEPI).

  - Economic factors within the institutions' geographic service areas which impact on the students' ability to pay, as well as statewide economic factors which impact on the state's ability to contribute to postsecondary education.

Out-of-state students account for a relatively low percentage of total student body at most of our state's public institutions, despite relatively low out-of-state tuition rates.

- The Commission believes the likelihood of substantially greater revenue from

increasing the non-resident tuition rates is minimal in comparison to the benefits the institutions and the state receive from the presence of out-of-state and foreign students. These students bring money into the state, have the potential to become future members of our state's work force, often rank high in their classes, and can enhance diversity at our public postsecondary institutions.

Graduate-level programs attract students from throughout the state, country and world.

- The Commission believes the tuition for graduate level and professional courses should reflect the higher cost of these programs.

- As their graduate programs gain increased recognition, the institutions need to consider increasing graduate-level tuition and fees accordingly.

In addition to the corporation taxes that Nebraska businesses pay in support of postsecondary education, many businesses also provide additional financial support through educational benefits for employees. These include direct payment of tuition, tuition subsidies, and specialized education and training programs for employees.

- The Commission supports such efforts on the part of employers to maintain a well-educated work force. Institutions should strive to maintain tuition levels that encourage employers to continue to provide education benefits to their employees.

- Business needs to recognize the benefits they receive from postsecondary education institutions and support them financially, which will help our institutions maintain reasonable tuition levels.

The relatively low tuition at Nebraska public postsecondary institutions is, in itself, one form of financial aid that benefits all, regardless of need. However, as we plan for the future, the Commission sees a need for increased state-supported financial aid for the financially needy in order to further enhance access and promote diversity at our postsecondary educational institutions.

- The Commission strongly endorses more financial aid for needy students.

- It is the responsibility of each postsecondary educational institution to help its students find financial aid opportunities.

- The Commission will monitor federal financial aid programs and the impact they have on financial aid availability and distribution procedures within the state.

The Commission, in cooperation with the postsecondary educational institutions, will monitor the impact of these many differentiating factors on tuition and fees and, as appropriate, make recommendations regarding changes in and the rationale for

tuition and fee policy.

Facilities Planning, Authorization and Funding

The traditional purpose for postsecondary educational facilities is as a vehicle to transmit the institution's services. The Commission recognizes the importance of high quality, well maintained facilities to support institutional efforts to offer exemplary programs. Concurrently, it is critical that proper planning for the construction, efficient use and maintenance of these facilities is accomplished within the context of our state's limited financial resources.

Boards and institutions are responsible to provide and maintain an adequate physical plant to house the institution's activities and to provide the equipment necessary to fulfill the institution's mission. Basic physical plant issues include preventative maintenance, deferred maintenance, efficiency, cost containment, and space utilization.

- To efficiently manage the state's resources, governing boards must monitor and take necessary action to utilize existing facilities to their fullest.

- Institutions need to protect the considerable physical plant investment that the citizens of Nebraska granted them. In the long-term, money is not saved by deferring facility maintenance. Nor are the long-term interests of the state served by omitting purchases of equipment needed to prepare exemplary graduates.

- Each institution is urged to establish an appropriate mix of space allocated to academic, research, administration, and student affairs functions.

- The Commission counsels institutions to monitor physical plant operating expenses and call for cost containment measures when necessary. Particular attention should be paid to energy and maintenance costs both in dollars and in share of the budget.

Change makes planning of facilities increasingly complex. This change is associated with new and emerging technologies, shifting demographics and enrollment patterns, new priorities, and initiatives prompted by this Comprehensive Plan. At a time of so much change, the Commission questions if it is the time to build facilities that may reflect yesterday's thinking in contrast to tomorrow's needs.

- Increased use of information technologies has significant implications for planning and designing, utilizing and altering business facilities within higher education. The state, the institutions, and the Commission need to reexamine periodically the standards relating to facilities in light of changes brought forth by new technologies. Neither the state, nor its institutions, will want to have the drain of resources represented by excess and under-utilized facilities.

Facilities are perhaps the best example of how decisions of institutions are made concrete, with long-term effects on operating budgets and programs. Buildings

constructed to meet today's immediate needs can block institutions from meeting needs of future generations. The same may also apply to buildings that are offered to institutions as gifts.

- The institutions' leaders need to have the vision to weigh the initial contribution of a gift with the long-term costs it brings with it. The ability of the institution to meet these long-term commitments without sacrificing the quality of necessary programs and services is the ultimate goal.

Institutions must also be forward thinking and address how changing technologies will affect future learning on their campuses. For example, in the near future, students may learn as much from computers in their dorm rooms as in the traditional classroom. This high-technology, non-classroom may connect students with the thinking of the finest scholars throughout the world. To build facilities today without careful consideration of such factors can create quickly obsolete facilities that become problems to be wrestled with by generations to follow.

- Governing boards and administrators are encouraged to rethink their long-range facilities planning process within the context of changing needs and consider options that can save the institutions', and consequently the state, resources and enable the institutions to meet changing needs. Flexibility is essential.

- Sharing facilities between institutions, allowing one institution to use existing, under-utilized facilities of another, needs to be considered as an efficient option to building new facilities. The Commission is aware that such cooperative arrangements have occurred between some institutions in the past and applauds these efforts.

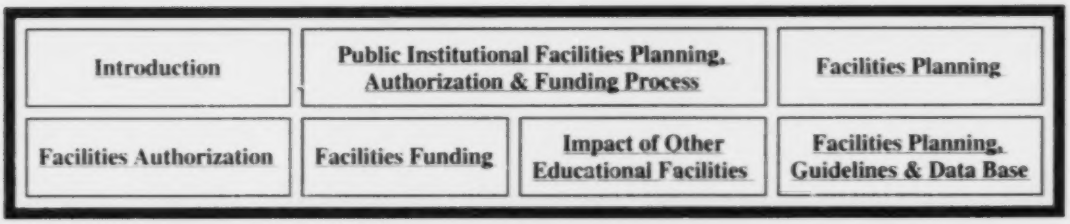
- Consideration of branch campuses in the context of off-campus education, efficiency of facilities and unnecessary duplication is a vital factor in an overlay of facility planning.

- In the construction of new facilities, the Commission supports the continued use of traditional funding sources. Examples of current funding include the University and State College's use of student fees to construct and maintain dormitories, student centers, student health services, food services; the use of state general revenue for instructional facilities and infrastructure projects; and the use of auxiliary funds for self-supporting facilities such as bookstores and child care centers.

This is the context for Commission review of institutional long-range plans, capital budget requests, and individual capital construction projects. A facilities data base and planning parameters developed on a statewide level are an essential foundation for this review. The *Statewide Facilities Plan* (Chapter 9) elaborates on these issues.

Chapter Nine

Statewide Facilities Plan



Introduction

The Commission has determined the content of the *Statewide Facilities Plan* shall outline broad priorities, and also establish Commission policy regarding the review and approval or disapproval of capital projects and recommendations for long-range facilities plans and capital budget requests.

Public Institutional Facilities Planning, Authorization and Funding Process

Prior to the construction of any publicly funded or operated facility at a public postsecondary educational institution, a three-step process must be completed.

A long-range facilities plan is required by statute for any institution requesting funds for a project in excess of $100,000. These long-range facilities plans also require review by the Commission according to state legislation and the Commission's need to provide statewide coordination of institutional facilities.

From these long-range facilities plans, individual project needs are determined and submitted for authorization to institutional administrations, governing boards, the Commission and the Legislature.

After authorization of an individual project in concept, size and scope, funds may be requested from the Legislature for design and construction. As is typically the case, the number of authorized projects likely will exceed the capacity to fund these identified needs. The task of prioritizing authorized projects then falls on the same entities mentioned above. The Commission's role in the funding cycle is to recommend a unified statewide prioritization of public postsecondary educational facility needs to the Governor and the Legislature.

In order for this cyclical process to evolve efficiently, the Commission provides its review criteria for each of these three steps as follows.

Facilities Planning

The Commission review of institutional long-range facilities plans shall include, but not be limited to,

the following criteria:

Assessment of how well an institution's long-range facilities plan supports the role and mission assignment of the institution

Consistency of the facilities plan with the Commission approved role and mission assignment will be reviewed in the context of implementing instructional, research, public service and support programs as follows:

- The array of academic programs existing and projected during the life of the plan (minimum of ten years).
- Scope of research and public service activities.
- Unique institutional characteristics (e.g., cultural center for the community, inter-collegiate athletic program, host site for federal facilities).
- Significant new initiatives planned which have facilities implications.

Current and projected student enrollment and staffing

The extent to which current and projected enrollment and staffing are realistically characterized in the plan shall be considered, including but not limited to, the following:

- Enrollment information shall include overall size and composition of the student population. Enrollment by level, discipline and other significant characteristics such as part-time population, and residential/commuter mix have a major impact in determining facilities needs. These enrollment projections shall be made for the intended life of the plan.
- Size of faculty and staff required to support implementation of the institution's role and mission assignment.
- Student/Faculty ratios and class sizes proposed for determining facilities needs.

Assessment and analysis of an institution's existing and projected land and facilities needs

The Commission shall review existing physical conditions of facilities and land holdings. The Commission shall also review a plan's assessment of required facilities and land needs to meet the role and mission assignments as discussed above. At a minimum, the following elements shall be reviewed:

- Existing facilities and land inventories shall be reviewed to lay the foundation on which the plan is based.
- The physical condition of existing buildings shall be reviewed, including use of an institution's *Building Quality Survey*.
- Assessment of the functional adequacy of buildings. This shall include a review of the adequacy of existing spaces to support the activities of faculty, students and

staff.

- Utilization of existing facilities shall be reviewed by the Commission to determine optimal use of the state's resources.

- Assessment of the condition and capacity of an institution's infrastructure including power plant systems, parking, roads and walkways.

- Adequacy of existing land for building sites, parking, outdoor recreation, intercollegiate athletics, agricultural activities, circulation, landscaping or other needs shall be assessed.

- Capacity for future development and expansion capabilities of a campus's existing facilities and land holdings shall be reviewed.

- Space guideline calculations of space needs by room-use type shall be reviewed.

- Facilities information from peer institutions shall be reviewed, as appropriate.

- Externally mandated program standards shall be assessed (e.g., animal research facilities, medical facilities).

- Specific new activities which will need to be accommodated on the campus over at least the next ten years will be accessed.

Assessment of identified needs based on the preceding analysis of existing facilities and program and service needs

The Commission shall review plans developed to accommodate identified facilities and land needs. These plans shall be in effect for the intended life of the plan and shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Land use, acquisition and/or divestiture plans.

- Building use plans for each program of the institution.

- Restoration plans of facilities to meet minimum physical condition standards, including infrastructure.

- Renovation plans to meet programmatic standards, to provide more appropriate support for proposed users, or to provide access to the disabled.

- Vehicular and pedestrian circulation and parking plans.

- Utilities extensions and improvement plans.

- New construction plans.

- Site development plans.

- Method to update the institution's long-range facilities plan as revisions are made.

Implementation strategy
An implementation strategy of the plans stated above shall include, but not be limited, to the following:

- A summary of individual projects including titles, a brief project description, and preliminary estimates of total project cost and fiscal impact in constant dollars shall be provided to and assessed by the Commission. Constant dollars shall mean the estimated cost of a project based on the first year of the institution's long-range facilities plan.

- The recommended sequencing of the projects shall be considered and based on relative urgency of need and phasing considerations.

- The impact of implementation (and consequences of non-implementation) on programs, services, enrollments and operating costs shall be made.

Facilities Authorization

Commission review and approval/disapproval of capital construction projects shall consider, but not be limited to, the following criteria:

Compliance with the Comprehensive Statewide Plan
Proposed capital construction projects shall show compliance with the *Comprehensive Statewide Plan* as applicable to a specific project.

Consistency with Commission program review
Proposed capital construction projects should not include new or existing programs disapproved by the Commission, or new programs yet to be reviewed by the Commission. Programs should drive the construction of facilities. Constructing facilities prior to program approval can result in programs being developed to fit existing facilities.

Compliance with the Statewide Facilities Plan
A proposed capital construction project shall be in compliance with the *Statewide Facilities Plan* in its entirety. This shall include consistency with an institution's long-range facilities plan. Until such time as the Commission completes the review of institutional long-range facilities plans, projects shall be reviewed in the context of the most recent governing board-approved institutional long-range facilities plan.

Extent of existing facilities rehabilitation needs
Projects proposing renovation, remodeling, termination or demolition of existing facilities shall demonstrate justification in a *Facilities Audit Report*. The report will address the physical condition of a facility's primary and secondary structure, and building systems. The report shall also assist institutions in prioritizing the requirements of existing facilities by determining the degree of rehabilitation needs for each existing facility at the institution.

Functional adequacy of existing facilities
Existing facilities are analyzed not only by the physical condition of a structure, but also by its ability to function for the programs and activities which utilize a facility. Proposed projects for renovation, remodeling, termination or demolition shall substantiate any programmatic deficiency. These deficiencies may be the result of inadequate flexibility or layout of spaces; insufficient utility services or infrastructure for activities; insufficient fixed or specialized equipment; or other functional inadequacies, such as noise or acoustical problems or handicap accessibility deficiencies. Consideration shall be given to externally prepared accreditation reports regarding the status of an existing instructional or service program as it relates to existing facilities. Proposed projects which address deadlines regarding possible loss of accreditation to programs approved by the Commission, will be given priority where such loss is deemed relevant and consequential by the Commission.

Quantitative adequacy of facilities
Proposed capital construction projects shall corroborate that the amount of space requested is adequately justified by staff evaluation and/or externally documented reports.

Compatibility with institutional planning parameters
Existing and new programs shall demonstrate compliance with institutional *Space and Land Guidelines*, and *Facilities Utilization Guidelines*, as applicable. Projects not in compliance with these documents are required to justify any deviations to receive approval by the Commission.

Ability to meet existing and future program needs
Proposed capital construction projects must demonstrate that they will meet existing and future program needs. This ability shall be demonstrated by review of individual space needs as they relate to enrollment, personnel, research, and service projections; and by addressing the flexibility of proposed spaces to accommodate future program or activity changes. This flexibility includes the ability to accommodate new information technologies such as telecommunications, etc.

Capability to fund future projects and/or operating and maintenance costs
The initial cost to construct a project usually is relatively small when considered over the life of a facility. In reviewing any capital construction project, the Commission shall examine the capacity of the institution to operate and maintain the facility or complete follow-up phases of a project. The institution must demonstrate the capacity to operate and maintain the proposed facility without significant additional resources.

Analysis of alternatives
All proposals for capital construction projects shall specify alternatives to the proposed project and justify that the proposal is the best long-term resolution of the problem. Possible alternatives to a proposed project may include:

- Expansion of an existing facility in lieu of a new structure;
- Increased utilization of existing facilities;

- Increased use of similar facilities in other public or private institutions; and/or

- Use of nontraditional modes of instructional delivery, such as telecommunication and distance learning, or use of off-campus centers.

Evidence that there is not an unnecessary duplication of facilities
The Commission will review each proposed project for unnecessary duplication. Unnecessary duplication will not substantially increase access and/or serve valid needs considering other existing public or private facilities in Nebraska, other states, or consortia such as the Midwestern Higher Education Commission Compact, which are reasonably accessible to the institution.

Enhancement of institutional effectiveness/efficiencies with respect to programs and/or costs
Proposed projects shall enhance the institution's effectiveness and/or efficiency in providing programs and services. This may be demonstrated by a program's ability to provide higher quality instruction, academic/student support, research, public service or administrative/ operational support to the institution. Efficiency of a project may include cost savings to an institution through more cost effective use of personnel or utilities, or illustrate the increased productivity of students, faculty and staff. Proposals that increase productivity or reduce costs while enhancing the quality of service are preferred.

Amount of funds requested are justified
The amount of funds requested for a proposed project should be consistent with the amount and type of space and equipment required, the professional services necessary, and other costs associated with a project.

Source(s) of funds are appropriate
Funding sources shall be appropriate for the type of facility being proposed, whether the source be state, federal, student, auxiliary or private funds, or a combination of these sources. The Commission will closely examine revenue bond proposals, among others, to consider whether the burden placed on those expected to pay the debt is justifiable. Regardless of the justification of a proposed project, consideration will be given to the ability of the requested funding source(s) to finance the project. Whether funding is proposed through state taxes, local property taxes, student fees, parking revenue or other sources, the review will include what effect the continuation at existing levels or increase of fees or taxes will have on those charged with paying those fees or taxes.

Facilities Funding

Review of capital budget requests by the Commission, and development of a unified prioritization of these requests into a statewide capital budget recommendation, shall be based on a review of the public postsecondary educational facility needs for the entire State. The use of weighted criteria in the prioritization of capital construction requests is intended to support the objectivity of the Commission's recommendations. The following provides a discussion of some of the major issues to be addressed in the prioritization of capital construction requests:

Ranking of statewide facilities categories

The Commission may consider the type of project being requested in developing a unified statewide prioritization of capital requests. The ranking of these categories shall be reviewed by the Commission on a regular basis and considered in the context of statewide needs. The following is a list of statewide facilities categories, including a general description and discussion of each category's relative importance in serving Nebraskan's public postsecondary education needs.

- ***Fire and Life Safety - Class I Projects***
  Those items that pose an immediate threat to the safety of the students, faculty, staff, or visitor to a public institution, shall generally be given the highest priority in the Commission's*Statewide Capital Budget Recommendation.* Items that do not pose an immediate threat (e.g., undisturbed asbestos, non-life threatening code violations, etc.) shall not be included in this category.

- ***Partially Funded Projects***
  Capital projects which have been previously approved by the Commission, and have been allocated partial funding for design and/or construction with state or alternative funding sources shall be given a high priority to prevent the disruption in programs or services. A project must continue to demonstrate high merit and make satisfactory progress toward completion to maintain this priority.

- ***Deferred Maintenance - Class I Projects***
  The Commission will give high priority for maintaining the State's existing physical assets. Particular attention will be given to items that require immediate action to provide for safety and protection against costly damage to facilities or an institution's infrastructure systems (e.g., power plant boilers, chillers or transformers; utility lines and tunnels; roads; walkways; etc.).

- ***Americans with Disabilities Act - Class I Projects***
  Structural changes that have been clearly found to be necessary for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 or are deemed necessary by physically challenged individuals comprise this category.

- ***Information Technology and Telecommunications***
  The Commission will give high priority to the use of instructional technology and telecommunications. Institutions are encouraged to enhance programs and services and provide increased access with appropriate use of these technologies.

- ***Institutional Planning and Programming***
  The use of funds to adequately plan and program facilities on an institutional and project level shall be given strong consideration by the Commission. The development of institutional long-range facilities plans and individual project programs should act as the catalyst to best utilize the state's resources in support of the role and mission of public postsecondary education. Such planning may enhance cooperation between institutions and support joint use of existing facilities.

- ***Energy Conservation - Class I Projects***
  Those projects which substantially reduce the energy requirements of a facility or

campus, and thereby reduce the State's financial commitment to utilities will, in almost all cases, be supported by the Commission, particularly when simple payback of the project from energy savings is within a three-year period.

- ***Fire and Life Safety - Class II & III Projects***
  This category consists of other code compliance and related projects that would improve safety.

- ***Renovation/Remodeling/Replacement of Existing Facilities***
  In general, renovation and remodeling of existing facilities will be given higher priority than new construction. The rationale for this is compelling. Since the dramatic increases in enrollment at postsecondary educational institutions from the mid 1960's to the late 1970's, enrollment has remained fairly stable with generally only moderate increases. In this context, there has not been the need for the building boom which occurred during that era. Many of the facilities constructed during this time are now approaching 30 years of age and have required at least some maintenance if not remodeling to accommodate changing program and technological needs. It is typical that every 25 to 50 years, a facility will require major renovation to repair or replace aging materials and building systems, and meet program and technological changes. The construction costs for these renovations are generally noticeably less than the cost of new construction, and because of this, renovation/remodeling is often a wise investment in lieu of new construction. An example of when renovation is not cost effective in lieu of new construction would be the accommodation of high tech laboratories in an older facility which could not functionally accommodate the necessary utilities. In these cases, replacement of a facility may be necessary. In almost all cases, replacement projects will include the divestiture of original space used by a program or service through demolition or sale, thus preventing increases in ongoing facilities operating and maintenance costs.

- ***Infrastructure Expansion***
  This category includes expansion of an institution's existing infrastructure system for use in expanding institutional space in the future. The need for additional space must be justified before consideration will be given to expanding infrastructure systems.

- ***New Construction Projects***
  The people of Nebraska have a substantial financial commitment in existing facility resources. There are circumstances, however, when specific programs or campus conditions require an addition to existing facilities or construction of new structures. Generally, all other alternatives shall be exhausted before this option is considered by the Commission.

- ***Deferred Maintenance - Class II & III Projects***
  This category includes other maintenance items that if neglected will quickly deteriorate and items that would fully renew a facility or infrastructure system.

- ***Americans with Disability Act - Class II and III Projects***
  This category includes all other items necessary to comply with this federal

legislation and improve accessibility.

- ***Energy Conservation - Class II & III Projects***
  Projects in this category will reduce expenditures for energy use.

- ***Institutional Land Acquisition***
  Proposed land acquisition required to meet the needs of individual capital construction projects should generally be included as a part of those specific project requests. Additional land acquisition requested to meet projected needs as outlined in the institution's long-range facilities plan, shall generally be considered as an individual project and receive its own priority by the Commission.

The Commission may choose to prioritize specific project proposals out of sequence with these facilities categories, based on additional prioritization criteria. Additional issues that may be considered in prioritizing capital construction requests are as follows:

Sector Initiatives
The Commission may consider governing board targeted "sector initiatives" in the development of priorities. Such designations enable the Commission to incorporate governing board priorities and strategic planning into its priority process.

Institutional long-range facilities planning
The Commission may consider governing board approved planning documents and their relation to specific project requests in its prioritization of capital projects. The Commission will review external/internal factors, strategic/facilities planning linkages, and methodologies for institutional capital asset management.

Immediacy of need
Prioritization of proposed projects shall be based on the degree of immediate need in contrast to future growth or expansion requirements. This does not mean a project proposal should not consider program growth in its planning. The purpose is to accommodate those programs with immediate needs first, with efficiency being one objective.

Quality of a facility
The condition and function of a facility for use by a program or service may be considered in the development of priorities. Potential qualitative issues include the condition of the primary and secondary building systems, and the functional layout of a facility for its intended purpose.

Unnecessary duplication
Unnecessary duplication of facilities may be evaluated in the prioritization process. Unnecessary duplication may be defined as a facility that does not substantially increase access and/or serve valid needs. The Commission will likely consider overall institutional utilization, reasonably accessible existing public and/or private facilities in Nebraska, neighboring states or consortia such as the Midwestern Higher Education Commission Compact, when considering unnecessary duplication.

Appropriate quantity of space

A program or service may show that a project provides an appropriate quantity of space for a program or service as part of the prioritization process. Potential methods of demonstrating an appropriate quantity of space include use of space or land guidelines, facility utilization reports, or recommendations from professional planners.

Role and mission
The relative ranking of each sector's role and mission (instruction, research and public service) and support services area (academic/student support and administrative/ operational support), may be considered by the Commission.

Degree to which an institution maintains its existing physical plant
In determining which projects receive priority in the Commission's *Statewide Capital Budget Recommendation*, consideration may be given as to how well an institution maintains its existing assets. The Commission does not support the consequence of deferring maintenance to justify need for new construction or substantial rehabilitation which may have been avoided by more prudent management.

Ongoing costs
Potential long-term costs associated with a capital construction request may be considered in the prioritization process. The Commission may wish to provide incentive to reduce state funding needs for facility operating and maintenance costs through energy conservation methods or use of alternative funding sources.

Phasing considerations
Proposed projects that require the completion of other projects prior to their beginning may be considered by the Commission when prioritizing individual project requests. For example, a project to expand power plant capacity prior to construction of a new or expanded facility may have priority. A project will not be artificially prioritized higher simply to meet a phasing requirement.

In addition to prioritizing capital construction requests, the Commission may also make general funding recommendations regarding the University of Nebraska and Nebraska State College capital construction budget requests. Additional issues may be considered by the Commission in developing a Statewide Capital Construction Recommendation, including but not limited to the following:

Economic conditions
The Commission may consider the existing and projected ability of the State to support its existing assets prior to considering additional requests.

Appropriate amount of tax funds
The Commission may consider what amount of tax funds is appropriate considering the type and use of a facility request in addition to other considerations.

Impact of Other Educational Facilities

The range and capacity of public, independent and private postsecondary educational facilities in Nebraska, neighboring states, and consortia such as the Midwestern Higher Education Commission Compact, which are reasonably accessible, shall be considered in the review of proposed long-range facilities plans, individual project requests and capital budget requests.

Consenting independent and private postsecondary educational institutions are encouraged to provide any available facilities information which would assist the Commission in the review of proposed capital construction projects at the State's public institutions in the context of reviewing facilities from a statewide perspective.

Facilities Planning, Guidelines and Data Base

The state and its postsecondary institutions must develop facilities planning guidelines and data base information. A statewide facilities information base will include appropriate information on the amount and condition of institutional facilities, including information on how well facilities are being utilized. This information will be useful in developing efficient and exemplary facilities to serve an institution's role and mission, and will also prevent the state from creating sprawling edifices which future generations cannot afford to support. It is the goal of the Commission that this information be used by the campuses to effectively manage their existing physical assets as well as plan for future facilities needs, and by the Commission in reviewing facilities from a statewide perspective. The Commission will establish, in collaboration with institutions, guidelines for developing a statewide facilities information base and for institutional long-range facilities plans, based on nationally accepted practices.